

THE TRAGEDY
OF BADEN

CARY·H·WILKINSON



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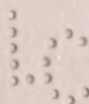
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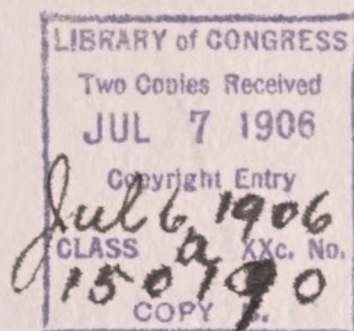
The Tragedy of Baden

BY
CARY H. WILKINSON

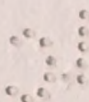


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THE TRAGEDY OF BADEN

CHAPTER I

ELLA COLEMAN had been a widow for two years, and the gloom of desolation following her sudden and severe bereavement had but partially worn away with time.

Her husband had lost his life in an altercation, and the law had vindicated his atrocious assassin, upon the plea of self-defense. Ella, who had looked upon her husband as the ideal of perfection, as did also the community in which he had resided, was felled by the blow for months afterwards, and in her sorrow clung but the dearer to the darling image of his love he had left for her to rear and nourish.

Mrs. Coleman was a lady of culture and refinement. She was possessed of beauty, and besides with a rich and lovely voice. Her husband's death left her in moderate circumstances, and her scanty means had been sparingly divided between herself and little daughter in order to supply their direst wants.

Katy was the name that had been given to the child, and during the life of the

father all that luxury could suggest had been lavished upon both the child and mother. Nothing but the most refined influences had been cast about the little one, and even at the age of ten she was by all who knew her considered to be the brightest, prettiest, and most endearing little lady in the community.

Katy was a typical blonde, with a shower of golden curls falling from her beautifully rounded head, while her eyes rivaled in the richness of their color the clearest cerulean blue. For a child she was well advanced in the rudiments of education, yet she was a total stranger to the ways and manners of the world.

Mrs. Coleman shed tears when she looked into the upturned face of her little daughter, and sought to solve the problem of her future existence.

“For myself, I care little or nothing; for my child, I am willing to die. Our means are now nearly exhausted, and I see but a single prospect before me of restoring my darling to the life she enjoyed during her father’s existence, and to which she is by birth and heredity entitled. I have talent, but to what purpose does it avail me, untrained or undeveloped? With development and culture my voice could be made profit-

able, and Katy could be restored to that life and environment which it was her father's unrealized dream to rear her in.

“To acquire such culture must necessarily take me far away from my child, for a while at least; and my scanty means would never admit of my success with her to care for while undergoing my training. I must leave my daughter here in some good hands, until such time as I can properly provide for her, when I can take her to my heart and home again, as once before. But here comes the perplexing problem—where can I place her? Who will be a mother to her while I am gone? Who will rear her in the life of refinement and rectitude I would have her brought up in?

“I know of no one to whom I would entrust so delicate a charge. We had our coterie of friends, but they have drifted out of sight, as friends are wont to do when the clouds of adversity lower over us; and I really have but one resort, and that is to place my darling in an orphan asylum, until I return. There is one here, and I have often noticed the sweet and happy faces of its inmates while passing by. Some of these children show the stamp of better days imprinted on their faces. They are not all waifs. I will place Katy under the special

care of the directress, and beseech her kindest love for my child; and should I never live to return and claim her again I will die with the consciousness that she is in good hands, who will watch over and protect her.

“And now this is my conclusion, and I must hasten to put my determination into execution; for time is valuable; and every day gained in getting off will bring my cherished hopes the nearer to fruition. Poor child, the parting will be hard on her, as it surely will be with me, but she is sensible; and if kindly treated she will soon become attached to those around her.”

Mrs. Coleman called Katy to tell her of her intentions, and the child came to her side, clasping a cherished, worn-out doll to her innocent breast as she responded. The mother carefully told her of the contemplated trip, and what it meant for her in the near future.

“Mamma will come and bring you better dolls, and prettier dresses; and we will both be happy in a nicer home.”

The child cried bitterly at the strange announcement, but finally her tears dried away like dew drops on the lily in the morning sun, and she fell to sleep sobbing in her mother's lap.

The next morning Mrs. Coleman dressed Katy in her neatest frock, and leading her by the hand she walked over to the orphanage, a Catholic institution a half mile distant from the Coleman cottage.

The mother rang the bell, and a Sister dressed in black and wearing a snowy white bonnet came to the door.

"Are you the Superior of this institution?" Mrs. Coleman asked.

"No, madam," was the reply, "but if you will walk into our parlor I will call her for you."

The mother and daughter entered as invited, and within a few minutes the Superior in charge of the orphanage made her appearance. She was a good-natured, gentle, and intelligent looking woman, and Katy's confidence was easily won on first acquaintance.

Mrs. Coleman briefly explained the object of her mission, and gave a succinct account of Katy's life from infancy to the present date.

"You wish to leave your little daughter with us, do you, Mrs. Coleman?"

"Yes, Mother, for I could not feel satisfied with her anywhere else while I am away. My means are too limited for me to place her in a boarding-school, and here I

understand you teach your children, as well as care for them in all other particulars."

"Yes," replied the Superior, "we try to fill the parents' place as nearly as we can."

"Katy has been tenderly raised," remarked Mrs. Coleman, "and never in all her life heard a harsh word spoken by any one. It is my intention to visit Europe, for maybe three or four years, and endeavor to perfect myself in voice culture, and thereby earn means enough to return and live comfortably with my child for the balance of my days."

"That is very commendable in you, I think," replied the Superior, "and while you are away we will endeavor to cultivate Katy in both vocal and instrumental music, ourselves."

"Has your daughter been christened?" inquired the Superior.

"Yes, in her father's faith," replied Mrs. Coleman, "which is different from yours, Sister; and in this respect I would prefer Kate to remain as he intended her. But when she grows older and can think for herself she may be at liberty to select what creed she pleases, as, after all, religion is a matter of conscience, and it is perhaps better to leave such matters to that invisi-

ble teacher, rather than to coerce the soul against its natural and honest convictions."

"Very well," replied the Superior, "we will endeavor to carry out your wishes, and I will only endeavor to inculcate in her the golden principles of all true characters—honesty, truth, and morality. After all," added the Superior, "we are only traveling toward the same goal, though perhaps on different roads."

"And now, Sister," added Mrs. Coleman, after a moment's meditation, "I would make another request of you, and one of much importance to both my child and to myself. Should accident of any kind overtake me, so as to render it impossible for me to return, or if I do not appear at the end of five years, then you may reasonably infer that something has occurred to prevent my ever returning, and it would be my wish that Katy should be placed with some good family where she might become independent, and where she would be enabled to earn an honest livelihood. I would dislike to think that my child would be forever cloistered in an asylum all her life; so, for the reasons stated, secure for her a good home with some respectable family, if I do not return to claim her at the end

of five more years. And now, Sister, I believe I have mentioned all the salient points I desired to speak about, and if you will take charge of her for me upon the conditions just mentioned, I will return with my child in the morning and leave her with you."

"I will do all in my power to carry out your wishes, Mrs. Coleman," replied the Superior; "and, moreover, I will take her under my special protection for you, while you are away."

While this conversation was taking place, Katy, who had been led off by one of the Sisters of the order, was enjoying herself with children of her age, in another portion of the building, and when found by her mother she seemed to be immensely interested in some little children's sport going on, and besides, she was the recipient of an orange, an apple, and a pocketful of candy. The child indeed was loth to leave her companions when her parent called her, a circumstance which the mother noted with glistening eyes.

On the following morning Mrs. Coleman and Katy, with the latter's little trunk, arrived at the orphanage, and the innocent child, with her golden curls and her eyes of blue, was formally transferred to the

Sisters of that institution for safe-keeping, until her mother's return.

Mrs. Coleman bade her child an affectionate adieu, and with promises of a return at some future day, when the two would live happily together in each other's love, turned away to face the trials of a new and untried vocation, for the single purpose of bettering hers and the financial condition of her daughter.

That evening Mrs. Coleman started for New York, in order to take a steamer bound for some European port, and Katy turned in with her new acquaintances, to mix and mingle with them for the next five years.

Many weeks passed by before a word of intelligence was received from the mother, when finally, late in the year of 1865, a letter was received at the orphanage, informing Katy of her mother's location in Milan, Italy.

"I have made a start at the work before me," she wrote, "but find it difficult to master the language that is spoken here. Everything is in Italian; and before I can proceed with my musical studies, I find it necessary to acquire a perfect knowledge of the language spoken all around me."

Katy was put to school and her teachers found her to be an apt and earnest scholar.

She was amiable, and her teachers loved her; she was pretty and attractive, and her companions chose her as the leader of their girlish circles. As Katy, like her mother, possessed a natural talent for music, she soon became a prominent figure in her singing class, and was early given a conspicuous part in the little exhibitions that were given now and then at the orphanage.

Thus passed away the months and the years, and Katy grew strong and robust with advancing time.

Mrs. Coleman wrote about once a month to the Superior of the orphanage, and whenever she could spare a portion of her means she always shared it with her child.

The girl grew from childhood into young womanhood. Her acquaintances, beyond her little circle of orphan children around her, were very few, and of the outside world she knew nothing. Men, to her, were pictured as the stronger class; things to be shunned; things rarely to be spoken of and never to be spoken to. For what reasons, she never was informed. "It must be right, or else I never would have been warned against them."

There were other bright children in the institution besides Kate Coleman; some of them were motherless, others fatherless;

some were both. Some bore the stamp of refinement on their faces; others did not. The majority of them were orphans, and the sword of sorrow had at some time in their early lives pierced their little hearts.

Noble souls provided for their wants, and generous men and women, in and out of Baden, never failed to respond when called on by the Sisters for some contribution for these little ones.

Often on Sunday afternoons visitors came to see the children and to inspect the institution. Some called with hearts beaming with sympathy for the friendless orphans, and laid gifts before them; others called through curiosity only; while possibly a few with sinister faces on them called for other purposes.

At the age of fourteen Katy received a letter from her mother stating that she had weathered the ordeal of her life.

“I can speak the Italian language now, and have been singing in light concerts; but at what expense! My health has failed; my means are exhausted, and but for occasional sewing for some respectable families I would long since have been stranded. I am promised a subordinate part with an opera company now being organized, which, if I secure, will at least afford me

bread. If I fail, however, in securing the position, then the Lord only knows what will become of me.”

This was the last letter Katy ever received from her mother, and after waiting a year for a reply to her answer, without response, she began to think of the request made by her mother before the parting.

“I must face the world; I must go out and seek a home amongst strangers. I must begin to earn an honorable existence for myself. But where can I find a home? Who will care to give me occupation?” Thus queried the artless child at the orphanage.

She was now fifteen years old; strong, beautiful, and well developed for her age. Kate could play and sing, and even had a fair knowledge of the culinary art. Besides, she was neat and tidy; unusually attractive; and withal, a good little house-keeper. Yet she knew nothing of the world, nothing of its pitfalls. This knowledge was reserved for her to learn later. Fortified by a sublime character and a thorough training, she was now about to embark upon an unknown sea; to enter the battle of life in a selfish and an unknown world, without a guide.

They had talked the matter over between them—Kate and the Superior of the asy-

lum—and Mrs. Coleman's request was remembered.

She was believed by this time to be dead. "Were it otherwise, my mother would long since have answered my letters. She is dead; and I can never see her face again, except in memory." She said to the Superior, "I have now no friend for counsel and advice, except yourself. I am old enough to work and make an honest living. It was my mother's last wish expressed as she was leaving; and now, Mother, if you can find me a good home I will go out and battle for a living."

CHAPTER II

ONE afternoon, early in the month of January, when the sun shone out with unusual warmth and brightness for the season, a carriage drove up to the door of the orphanage, and a woman, well dressed and attractive, so far as apparel could make her, alighted and called for the Superior in charge of the asylum.

“My name is Mrs. King, Sister,” she announced, “and I have called to inquire if you could not furnish me with a girl; some good and attractive child, whom I could adopt as my own, and whom I could furnish with a good and comfortable home. My husband and myself have no children of our own, and we feel greatly disposed to adopt and raise a child whom we might call ours, and treat as such. We both understand that it is your custom, now and then, to place out your girls as they grow up, and I have called this afternoon in search of one whom you could recommend in every respect as being worthy of the love and con-

fidence of an honest and respectable couple."

"Mrs. King," replied the Superior, "we do, under certain conditions, place our children out when they become old enough to be self-sustaining, and where we can be well assured as to the character and standing of the parties who wish to adopt and properly provide for them. In this respect we are obliged to be very particular, and before we place out our children we have to receive satisfactory recommendations about those we entrust them to. We have a few girls at present," continued the Mother Superior, "whom we might place, if the proper credentials and recommendations were furnished; but as I just remarked, these must be supplied in advance; and promises of good care and treatment must be made before we can dispose of our children to strangers."

"Your terms are proper," replied Mrs. King, "and as for the promises of treatment you exact, we would only be too glad to state that whoever you might entrust to our care would be treated as a natural child, and be provided for as such. Now what kind of references would you require, before disposing of your girls?"

"Only first-class ones," responded the

Sister. "Bring us the recommendations of some two or three well-known personages of high standing, and we would be pleased to take up this matter with you. We have the children to dispose of, and when you present the proper recommendations you may make your own selection. May I ask," she continued, "where you reside, and what occupation does your husband follow?"

"We live in the country when at home, Sister; and my husband is a plain, honest farmer. Letters to reach us should be directed to Bristol, near which place we reside. We travel at times, and are well known to many of the best persons in the State. In fact, my husband does business with many of the leading citizens of this place, and could bring you any recommendation you might desire from many of them. Now, if an indorsement from such persons as your Mayor and the Bishop of this diocese would suffice, I could easily obtain them, as my husband and myself are well known to both of them," responded Mrs. King, with emphasis.

"Testimonials from these two persons, Mrs. King, would be sufficient, and when you present them I will furnish you with a good, honest, and industrious girl."

That night Kate and the Mother Supe-

rior walked in the moonlight, in the orphanage grounds, with arms around each other, while Mrs. King at home was busily engaged in getting up the required recommendations from the Mayor and the Bishop of Baden.

“Mother,” said Katy, “won’t it look queer for me to be managing a farmer’s home for him. Think of me milking the cows; getting the breakfast ready, and playing the farmer’s daughter. It’s my ideal of a happy life, Mother,” said the guileless girl, as she tossed back a handful of golden curls over her shoulder.

“And, Katy, best of all,” said the Mother, “you will be beyond the temptations of the world, while earning a quiet and comfortable home.”

“What are they, Mother? What are temptations of the world? Did I ever hear of them?”

“No, dear, never! But the outside world is very different from the convent life you have been leading for the last five years; and I want to put you on your guard before leaving here. Beware of intimacy with others; beware of bad compny; and above all, beware of flattery. Remember your training, and in case of any doubt let your conscience be your guide. Ask yourself

the question, 'Is it right?' and if the reply is no, turn your back on any act or thought that may confront you."

"Mother, did Mrs. King appear pleasant and attractive?"

"Well, child, we cannot judge people in this world by their appearances. Falsehood lurks in many faces; often the benignly featured are but counterfeits; and the frigid and repellant looking sometimes angels in disguise. However, testimonials weigh more with me than appearances; and if Mrs. King's are satisfactory, then, my darling, I expect I will have to give you up."

"Mother, will you come to see me in my new home? That is, if I go away to be a farmer's daughter?"

"I could not promise to do so, Katy, as my duties compel me to remain with my little ones all the time; but you can come here from time to time, and always find a welcome and a home at Baden Orphanage."

They walked up and down on the long gallery fronting the orphan asylum; while the little ones played on the lawn in the moonlight, in front of the house, with the motherly eye of the kind-hearted Sister upon them.

"Now, Kate, bear in mind, dear, all that

I have told you; and especially of flattery from either young or old men, since more evil lurks under that mask than under any other disguise the devil employs."

"Why, are they that dangerous, mother?"

"Yes, child, and oftentimes more. Under no circumstances let any of them kiss you."

"Why, Mother, were you never kissed, when a girl?" asked Katy, in her innocence.

"That's not the question, dear. I am the interrogator now, not you."

"Mother, were you ever engaged?"

"My child, are you crazy to ask such nonsense?"

"No, but I heard a girl say you were here because no one would marry you in the world. Is that so, Mother?"

"Katy, it is not so, and since you have brought the subject up so flatly I will answer you. I was engaged once, but my affianced died, and with his death went all my love for earthly objects. His death drove me to a religious life, as death has driven others."

"How sad, Mother!" exclaimed Katy. "But oh! would it not be nice if you were married, Mother, and I was living with you? I would do all your work, and you

would let me love you. You know, I have no one on earth now to love. I am an orphan. You do not know how lonesome it makes me feel at times. I see other children with mammas and papas to love them, while I have none. Why is this, Mother?"

"My darling child, as long as life lasts I will love you, and you must look to me as to a natural mother; and in any hour of distress come to me, and I will be your mother and you will be my child."

On the following afternoon the same carriage and occupant arrived at the orphanage that had called there the day before. Mrs. King, dressed in black, threw back her veil as she entered the building and called again for the Mother Superior.

"Madam," she exclaimed, as the latter appeared, "had time afforded me the opportunity I could have secured you many more testimonials of our standing; these, however, I hope will be sufficient, as they have been furnished us by the best known and most respectable people in this community." Saying which, Mrs. King presented two short testimonials, one from no less a personage than the Mayor, and the other from the Rt. Rev. Bishop of Baden. Each spoke in praise of the family in question, and each commended the bearer to the

confidence of all concerned in the King family.

“Your recommendations are entirely satisfactory, and as you promise faithfully to bring up the child under the proper influences, and provide for her as though she were your own, I will call the one I have in mind for you, and if the liking is mutual, I will permit you to take her along.” Saying this the Superior excused herself for a moment, in order to bring in the girl.

“Katy,” exclaimed the Superior, “this is Mrs. King, the lady who wishes to give you a home, and who promises to care for you just as she would for her own. Would you like to go with her?”

Mrs. King had arisen when Kate entered, and offered her hand to the girl. The latter acknowledged the salutation with some degree of reserve; for while Katy was exceedingly anxious to be about some honorable and independent mission in the world, she was not disposed to jump at such offers unless accompanied with some exterior attraction. In this instance there was none whatever.

Mrs. King was not the possessor of an attractive face; on the contrary, she carried an uninviting one. Nor were her manners

captivating, but rather the reverse. She was repellant. However, thought Katy, her credentials are excellent, and who knows that behind her hardened features there may be a warm and tender heart.

"I wish to secure a girl of your age," said the visitor, "who can assist me about my house, and at the same time be a member of my family. I can teach you in a short time how to become independent, and we can travel about and see the larger cities of the Eastern States. I will provide you with clothing, food, and shelter, and besides what change you may need from time to time in order to make your own purchases."

"I will go with you," said Katy, "and if you will do what you now promise, I will bind myself to stay with you for two years."

Articles of agreement were then drawn up between them and duly signed, and soon Katy was riding off with her purchaser, under a two years' promise of servitude.

It had been many years since Kate had ridden in so pretentious a vehicle, and the exhilaration produced by her stylish conveyance caused her spirits to rise, and her girlish curiosity tempted her to ask questions.

“Do we go to the country?” inquired the orphan.

“Not now,” replied Mrs. King, “but later we may.”

“What have you been doing with yourself,” inquired Mrs. King, “ever since you’ve been in that orphanage?”

The question, and more particularly the manner in which it was addressed, occurred to Katy as being a little abrupt, but she placed a charitable construction upon the motives prompting it, and answered that she had been doing a little of almost everything a girl of her age could do, with the object in view of helping the Sisters about the place. She sewed; sometimes cooked; often waited on the table; looked after the younger children, and often taught them. Besides this, she sang in the choir, and played on the piano at exhibitions.

“Why, you ought to make an all-round handy girl about the place,” remarked Mrs. King.

“Did you ever go a-begging?”

“Never in my life,” replied Katy.

“Where are your people?” asked Mrs. King.

“Dead, I suppose,” answered the girl sadly.

"You suppose? Don't you know they are dead?" asked the lady.

"I know that my father is dead, for I have heard my mother say that he was killed unjustly by some bad man, many years ago."

"Was your father Frank Coleman?" asked the lady earnestly.

"His first name was Frank," answered Katy. "Did you know him?"

"Well, I heard something of that affair at the time, but I was under the impression that the other man was acting in self-defense," said Mrs. King. "It was a shooting scrape, I believe," she continued, "and the courts allowed that your father was the aggressor."

"All I know about the case," said Katy, "is what my mother told me years ago; and I remember her telling me it was a base and unjustifiable murder."

"Well, that would naturally be her way of looking at it, being as she was the widow; but the courts are nearly always right after they get through sifting those cases; so you needn't believe all the things you hear about people in this world. Who was it that killed your father?" asked Mrs. King.

"I never heard his name, or if I ever did,

I do not recollect it now," replied the girl.

"And what became of your mother?"

"She went to Europe shortly after father's death, and must have died there over a year ago."

"Then you are a sure enough orphan, aren't you?"

"Yes," replied Kate, "as much so as any we left at the orphanage."

"Then you will take my name, being as you are now my adopted daughter, and while with me you will be known as Katy King; how does that strike you?"

"I suppose," answered Kate, "it will do as well as any other."

Mrs. King had obtained now about all the information she desired, and she called to the driver to take her to number 750 Pine avenue.

"Now, as we are nearly home I will tell you something of your duties, and of what will be expected of you. In the first place, I do not believe in my daughter's receiving beaux and other trifling visitors, until she is older than you are. So we will cut out all that; and, besides, letter-writing is an objectionable thing at your age. I guess the Sisters told you that, didn't they?"

"No," said Katy, "but they warned me on other subjects."

"They did, hey! did they? Well, you are my daughter now, and you must do as I tell you. Do you understand?"

"I certainly do," replied Kate.

"Now, we are going to treat you right, but we will expect you to work."

"I have been doing that for the past five years," remarked the girl.

"Yes, but that was all parlor work," said Mrs. King. "I want you to understand money-making work. I want you to forget all those convent things, and take up with something practical."

"Now, I want to tell you before we get home something of my husband. He is a good man, and a good Christian, and is very charitable; but at times he will get out o' sorts, like all other men, and say things he ought not to say. You must never ask him anything about his business affairs. And when he is cross or out of sorts you just go in your room and lock your door, as I do, and never mind his riling or what he says to you."

"Next, we don't believe in any gadding."

"In what?" inquired Kate.

"Gadding! don't you know what gadding is?"

"No, what is it?"

"Why, running here and there, prying

into other people's business. You will stay in most of the time and try and improve yourself, and when you go out I must know all about it."

Kate thought her regulations rather severe, but said to herself, "Mrs. King may be right; at least I have been cautioned along these lines before by those I know were right."

"All right, Mrs. King," she answered, "I will stay in and improve my time, and when Mr. King gets into one of his spells, I will just go and lock myself up as you suggest."

They now arrived at the number called for on Pine street, and Katy was directed into a small two-story building of five or six rooms, around which extended a high and dismal looking board fence.

"Well," said she to herself, "this is not a very attractive invitation into the new world, but it is in fair keeping, I suppose, with the owner. This must be the city villa, while we stay in town during the winter months and spend our money."

"Follow me now," directed Mrs. King, "and I will show you your room."

Had the residence itself been unattractive from a casual inspection of the outside, the interior was none the less inviting.

Katy's was a small and rudely furnished room in the L.

"Here is your sleeping-place," said the lady, "and downstairs is the kitchen, and next to it is the dining-room. Now put on your working clothes, and let me see what you know about cooking."

The girl did as instructed, and soon had a small fire blazing in the antiquated stove.

"Now, you go in there and set that table for two. He won't be in until late, as he has to work pretty late these times, and then don't often get much for it."

Between the two, in a short time, a frugal meal of tea and buttered toast was served, and the maid and mistress sat down together to partake of it.

"Will Mr. King be home for his supper?" was asked.

"If he does he can look out for himself," was the reply. "You be down by six in the morning and have your fire ready, and I will show you what to cook."

That night Kate lay awake for some time after retiring; awake and wondering; wondering what it all meant, and contrasting the sharp differences between her present little barefloored cell with the cozy dormitory of the orphanage she had occupied the night before.

CHAPTER III

KING COON had been in business on his own account for several years; first at one place, and then at another, as fortune seemed to favor him. Where he originated it is difficult to state accurately. There is a vague suspicion of Liverpool, in the early forties. He never told his family affairs to any one, and it is doubtful if even his wife ever knew where he came from. He had lived both in New York and in New Orleans at different times, and was chased out of both places by the police on account of vague and repeated infractions of the law and a possibility of the penitentiary.

He came to Baden soon after the civil war, believing it to be a field of great possibilities for the prosecution of his nefarious calling. Wherever he had hitherto resided he had gotten into trouble, and had been compelled by various police authorities to "move on." Even after he landed in Baden he had been a target of suspicion, and many an unproved crime had been laid at the door of old King Coon's workshop,

exhausted for want of proof to send him to the penitentiary.

Coon had been on trial for his life on two occasions, but had escaped conviction each time owing to the technicalities of the law, and now, emboldened by his several escapes from justice, he began to think that he possessed a charmed life, and this delusion made him more unscrupulous than ever.

For many years past he had been engaged in the profession of gambling, and was always looked upon as a suspicious character. Even his gambling companions themselves had eyed him with lowered eyebrows, and he was always regarded by them as a man to be let alone when angry. In his travels through life he had picked up his wife at some way station, and found her congenial and fully in sympathy with the outlawed life he was leading. She married him under the delusion that his family name was King, when in reality it was Coon; but for social reasons he announced himself as King and dropped his genealogy.

Katy set about performing the domestic duties assigned to her, wondering at the peculiarities of her new relations, yet cheerful with the hope that the life she had

just entered would lead to good results in the near future. "They are strange farmers," she thought, "but then this is only temporary, and with the return of spring we will probably all go to our country home."

She had been there a week, and as yet had never seen Mr. King, except at a distance, when he was departing from the house in the afternoons. He usually reached home about three in the morning and went to his work, as he called it, in the evenings; and she never for a moment suspected that he was pursuing the life of a gambler instead of the occupation of an honest tradesman. King had never met her. He had questioned his wife as to who she was and where she came from. Mrs. King had told him where she obtained her, and that her name was Katy Goldman.

"Well, you train her," said he to his wife, "for we will soon have some new work for her to do."

One afternoon he met Kate face to face in the building.

"You are the new girl, I believe, that Mrs. King has brought here."

"Yes, sir," she replied, "I am doing the housework for your wife."

He passed on, and Katy saw no more in

his bleared features to attract her admiration than she had seen in his wife's. Her life thenceforth became routine and monotonous. She had no worthy associates, was allowed no visitors, nor could she even write to her only friends at the orphanage. Nor were there any books about the place from which she could imbibe a moment's pleasure. Only an almanac, some two years old, lay at her command, and this she soon had memorized. Sometimes she leaned from her window and gazed wistfully out into the streets below, and into the yards of the neighbors. This too soon became monotonous, and she sewed, stitched, and darned on anything handed to her, finding it an actual amusement instead of a dreary occupation to do so.

Mrs. King was unsocial, sordid, and fault-finding.

"Can't you sing any?" she inquired.

"Yes, but I did not know whether you would allow me to do so or not," replied the girl.

"Well, if you don't holler too loud you can try your voice sometimes." And Katy would softly breathe out her pure young spirit now and then in some sad and gentle sonnet she had learned at the orphanage. She scrubbed and cooked, waited on the

table, and sewed as a pastime, and wondered if this was the lot of all young girls who were starting out in life.

One night King came in late as usual, and was under the influence of liquor. He was loud and abusive, and much of his brutal conversation could be heard by the girl. Then blows followed, and she heard him order his wife out of his room.

“Take this and go!” he cried in a loud voice.

Kate secured her door, and on the following morning Mrs. King appeared for her breakfast with a black and swollen eye.

“My! but that new father of mine must be a Tartar,” thought Kate. “But she told me he had his spells at times, and I suppose this must be one of them. What a contrast between this and my late peaceful home with the orphans!” Months of this life passed by, and Katy began to entertain doubts. “Can they be the good people so highly recommended? Can they be farmers at all? Here have I been for six months, and have seen no evidences of either. Life has not the sunshine I expected to find in it. There must be some mistake. Would that I could alter my situation; but how can I do it? They have my written agreement to stay with them for two years, and not

one-half of that time has yet passed. If I could only reach the orphanage again; if my mother was only alive! But no! these are impossibilities. Both are beyond my reach now, and I must wait and bear my imprisonment, and make the best of it."

One night it rained, and as usual Mr. King came in late, or rather very early in the morning. That afternoon he called his wife.

"Here, take these shoes of mine and make that girl shine them up." The wife brought them to Katy and commanded her to clean them.

"Whom for?" asked the girl.

"For King, of course," was the reply; "who do you suppose they belong to?"

"Then I refuse to touch them; I will shine no man's shoes on earth," answered Kate.

Mrs. King let the brogans drop from her hand in astonishment, and stared at the defiant girl.

"What, do you rebel?" she exclaimed.

"I certainly do," said the girl with emphasis.

"Do you know what he would do with you if he heard you? He would kill you, or choke you to death," said the wife.

"He may do both if he wants to, but I am not going to shine his shoes."

"You shall do it!" said Mrs. King.

"I will not," said Kate, stamping her little foot on the floor, and shooting a dart of defiance into the eyes of her adopted mother, that carried conviction with it.

"Didn't you promise to obey me when you came here for a home?"

"No, I did not."

"Didn't you promise to do all my household work for me?"

"Yes, but such degrading service is not household work, and before I would sully my hands on such a job I would jump out of that window."

"What in the hell is all this racket about?" inquired King, coming now to Katy's room half dressed.

"I am lecturing this girl about some of her work," replied his wife.

"If those shoes ain't shined in five minutes I will lecture your neck; now get about it!" shouted King to his wife as he turned and walked off.

"Shut your door! I will shine them myself," said Mrs. King. "You are no better than I. You've got too much ginger in you for me, anyhow, and I will have to take some of it out."

"I am willing to do all your regular household work, but I will clean no shoes for either you or him," answered Kate.

Mrs. King did the work herself, and it was done on time. This little incident caused Kate to do some additional thinking.

"They are certainly a wonderful pair," she murmured, "the like of whom I never heard of in my life—so brusque, so unrefined; but then maybe all the farmers are that way. My first year's service is nearly out, and I expect I can stand it a little longer."

Poor girl, she little dreamed of the service that was in store for her. One day Mrs. King informed her adopted daughter that they were going to move. "And you will go along," said she, "and have a little different job to perform."

"When and where?" asked Kate.

"Down in the town somewhere, and about the first of the year. Now this is all you are going to know, so don't let it turn your head, but go on and do your work like before."

The idea of any change from the dreary spot on the hill into town was a ray of joy through the saddened heart of the orphan girl. Nothing could be gloomier

than her present surroundings. Any change must be for the better. "They are awfully severe on me, but I can not say I have ever detected anything dishonorable about them; only a plain, brusque, honest farmer and his honest wife."

Winter came on, and with it came Kate's sixteenth birthday. She enjoyed it alone; the first sad anniversary in her life. Heretofore, she had always been remembered on that day; even during infancy by her darling mother, whom she now saw plainer than ever in her youthful memory. While at the orphanage her anniversary never passed without some token of love from the Superior. It was so different now. Childhood had glided into the past, and lovely womanhood had come to take its place. As she sat in her little room that night gazing out on the moonlight and silent cottages around her, tears came to her eyes, and sobbing for the first time during her servitude, she threw herself upon her little white coverlid and sobbed herself to sleep.

Christmas time came; that joyful period for every soul on earth. But it brought no pleasures for Kate. She could hear the mirth on the outside, but within her narrow sphere all was desolate. The family dined together on that day; something

they rarely ever did, and there was beer for dinner. The girl was asked to drink with her adopted parents, but she declined.

"Look here," said Coon, gruffly, "you must get out of that."

"I never drank in my life," she replied.

"Well, there's a great many other things I expect you never did in your life that you will have to take to sooner or later."

The rest drank and grew red in the face and boisterous, the child-woman refraining and looking on in disgust. The great event in the Coon family was now at hand. They were about to launch into a new and fascinating business. King Coon thought there could be much money made in it if conducted according to his ideas; more than at gambling alone. He had gotten hold of a few hundred dollars, and had rented and fixed up a place downtown. The wife and adopted child were to help in their respective capacities, and were to live and sleep in rooms above the business department. The move was hailed with secret pleasure by the girl. It was a change. It was better than dreary solitude.

"I will see new faces," said she to herself. "I will hear new sounds. My term of bondage lacks now but ten months to

reach its ending, and I can stand it. The move cannot prove worse than the existence here.”

One Saturday morning they all moved off the hill and entered their new abode in the thickest part of Baden. It was not the choicest portion of the city, but rather the reverse. Great numbers of men, women, and children passed up and down the street, and the jargon of busy life was in striking contrast with the cemetery solitude of Baden's suburbs.

The new house was a two-story building with the living rooms above and the working rooms below. The Coon family entered the premises through the alley gate, and went upstairs. Men moved the furniture and hastily put it together and in proper place. When all this had been accomplished the head of the family directed the women to come down with him and look at his enterprise. On the ground floor there were a vacant room or two in the rear, in which were a few cots with a blanket apiece spread out over them. Likewise, there were a few new chairs and tables, and these rooms seemed to be in readiness for lodging occupants.

“Now come in here,” he directed, “and see the business part,” saying which he

opened a connecting door and the trio entered.

Katy's eyes had never beheld such a place in her life. There in silence and alone, before her, stood all the paraphernalia of a regular bar-room. There was the bar itself; the counter; the bottles filled with different brands of liquors; cigars and tobacco at the side; pictures on the wall of athletes sparring with each other and jockeys preparing to race bobtailed nags; tables and chairs in the center of the room, and pretty glasses tinted in various colors and of different shapes. There were beer and brandy, gin and whiskey, bitters, liquors and other brands of intoxicants in apparently inexhaustible quantities. The large mirror in the background attracted Katy's attention, and she stood before it and gazed at her reflection for fully a minute. She had not seen her image for over a year, and she scanned it closely. In the rear of the saloon, for such it was, there stood a second-hand piano.

"Go there," said Coon to Katy, "and make some music."

She did as commanded; seated herself at the instrument; ran over the keys and began playing what entered her mind the first. This was "Nearer, my God, to

Thee," a piece of music just out which she had learned at the orphanage.

"By Jupiter!" exclaimed Coon, "none of that sort here; we are not running a meeting-house. Get on to something lively."

"I know nothing of such music," responded Kate.

"Then you must catch on mighty quick," he commanded, "for I want fast music here."

Then it flashed over Katy that she was to be the musician, and she shuddered for an instant.

"Here," said Coon, handing her a piece he had drawn from a selection of three for the piano, "play this one."

She glanced at it a moment and then struck up the reigning ballad of the day, "Champagne Charley," much to the satisfaction of her master.

"Now, that machine is for you to run," said he, "and every spare minute in the day you can get, come down and work on that music until you know it well."

That night "The Crescent" was thrown open to the public, and free drinks, with music at the piano by some blear-eyed professor, were served to the people of Baden. The ladies remained upstairs that evening,

listening to the revelry below; Mrs. Coon delighted at the grandeur of the enterprise, and Katy dazed at the suddenness and enormity of the situation she found herself placed in. All through her life she had been taught that such places were immoral and houses to be dreaded and avoided. What would her dead parents say if they could rise and speak? What would her friends at the orphanage say, if they but knew it?

Katy lay listening to the mirth and music underneath until it ceased, and she said to herself, "I will watch my opportunity, and if I notice anything that appears to me wrong, I will fly, regardless of my written word to stay here for two years."

With the succeeding silence after twelve she fell to sleep, and was only awakened late next morning by the rumbling of the wagons moving up and down the street in front of the saloon.

CHAPTER IV

IN the art of knavery King Coon had grown to be an adept. So often had he escaped the clutches of the law; so often had he gone unwhipped of justice when he merited punishment, that he began to believe that he would be especially protected in any nefarious act he might commit.

But he was adroit in his scheming, and went slowly when about to launch any criminal undertaking. With a good lawyer and a hundred-dollar bill, he argued, there was nothing to fear from any court in the country. He had been in scrapes before, and he had the fullest confidence in the two agencies mentioned, and knew their value.

"That fellow charges me two dollars an evening for his work at the organ," a term he always applied to the piano, "and this means fifty dollars a month out of my pocket. I can save this amount and I am going to do it. The girl can handle that machine just as well as that crank, and she shall do it. But, I must go slow at this business. She might kick if I push her. I will sugar

the way for her, and let that fellow out.” Kate was gradually prepared for her occupation. In the first place, she was surprised at being the recipient of two beautiful dresses—tailor-made and flashy. Besides these, attractive shoes and slippers and delicate perfumery and underwear and ribbons were lavished upon her, and she now began to think that the day of appreciation and kindness had begun to dawn upon her, and that life had reached the turning point where happiness would outweigh the sorrows of her existence.

About a month after the removal of the family to The Crescent she was invited by her adopted father to come daily to the saloon below and use the piano. “Come in the early mornings, before the crowd assembles,” Mr. Coon said, “and practice an hour or two upon the pieces you will find on the machine.”

Thus, by degrees, Katy found her hours of practice gradually undergoing an advance from time to time, until by the end of her first month’s experience she found herself entering the saloon at 8 p. m., instead of at 8 a. m. as in the beginning, for the purpose of furnishing music; and instead of two hours as at first, Mr. Coon required her to play now until twelve o’clock every

night, a period of four hours of continuous labor. Her performances soon told upon the cash receipts of the house. Men of all ages and grades of society flocked there at night to see the pretty girl and hear her music. Occasionally some of them, emboldened by a glass or two of beer or something stronger, would crowd about her and furnish words to some of her selections; some went further and invited her to drink. She had her orders, however, on this subject, and never yielded.

“Don’t you open your mouth to any of them,” she was told, “except to answer questions. I’ll do all the talking necessary, if any has to be done, and you just go on and make your music, and keep your mouth shut.”

During the second month of her vocation as pianist for The Crescent she was called on to diversify her duties. One evening a large crowd of men were sitting around the little tables in the saloon, drinking, smoking, playing cards and dominoes, and singing senseless and discordant snatches of some half-remembered song. Coon went to the girl at the piano, and tapping her on the shoulder kindly, for him, remarked, “Come and help me a while, there’s a big crowd here, and I am short on waiters.”

The request was so different from all of his former harsh commands that it went to her heart in the nature of an appeal, and she left the piano and went to the bar for the drinks and instructions.

“Here, serve these glasses to number six, and collect for them.”

There were four men at the table, playing dominoes; and at the appearance of the beautiful girl so stylishly dressed and sweetly perfumed down went the game and up went the faces of the players.

“Won’t you come and join us?” one inquired. She gave him a frown and firmly declined.

“Won’t you tell us your name?” She made no reply, but walked off with the change they had given her. Again and again she was called on to answer the orders for beer; for it had been a festival day in the town and the crowd at The Crescent was unusually large that night. Sometimes it was a single glass of mysterious drink she handed around; sometimes as many as six glasses of beer upon a single waiter. Young men and old ones, and even mere boys whose parents thought them elsewhere, filled the room, and every eye stared on the girl with her golden hair

streaming down to her waist and clasped together by a silver band.

King Coon looked on the picture before him with a complaisant smile. The patronage was beyond his anticipation. His liquors were of the cheapest brands, and consequently of the most pernicious quality, but the greatest source of satisfaction to him was the consciousness of having completely broken in the girl to carry out his bar-room purposes.

"She's a slick one," he said to himself, "and will draw trade in my bar-room. Besides this, she will save me six hundred dollars a year, six thousand in ten, on that piano."

"More beer!" was the cry up to midnight and after; and when Kate retired that night she was too weary from her work to dwell on the incidents of her bar-room experience. She had now broken the ice; she knew her duties and went about them regularly and automatically every evening at eight o'clock. Little or no time was left for reflection. The lights, the music, the men and their hilarity came and went in a regular procession before her. To the first she closed her eyes, to the latter her ears, to the entire array her heart.

"It's a queer life I am leading; so totally

different from what I ever expected to enter. Who would have thought it during my mother's life; yes, even during my happy stay at the orphanage. I now see through it all. I have been stolen for a life of servitude. They are counterfeits; they are questionable characters."

Coon had hired a boy to assist him behind the counter, but he was young and inexperienced in such business, and his master was severe toward him on the slightest provocation. The boy stayed with him just two months, when he threw up his job on the plea of leaving the city. Katy was not allowed to converse with him, nor with any others about the place except her adopted parents. She furnished the music at night, and at all times when it became necessary for her to do so she was required to serve drinks and lunch to the customers, and to circulate about amongst the visitors and solicit orders from them. Sometimes everything went off without incident, at others it did not. Remarks were often made by facetious young men which she did not understand, and therefore did not relish. On one occasion she was called on to assist the proprietor in removing an intoxicated young man to the "cooling-room," as they called it, at the rear of the bar-room.

“You will excuse me, sir, I will decline the job.”

Coon grew furious at her refusal to perform any service he exacted of her, but he suppressed his wrath at the time, and called in his wife to assist him. They dragged the boy across the sanded floor, as he was too limp to be carried along in any other fashion. His companion fled from the place at the sight of his partner's condition, and left him to his fate. In removing the young man his handkerchief rolled from his pocket and Kate picked it up. Having no better place to preserve it from loss, she slipped it on the inside of the waist of her dress and proceeded to wait on the customers, the boy at the bar drawing the beverages called for. Coon and his wife were an unusually long time in performing their work of disposing of the young man they had dragged across the floor, and on his return to the room the proprietor announced that he had called for a carriage and sent the young man to his home.

Kate was scored severely that night by Coon for her refusal to assist when called on by him to do so. She gave him to understand that she would do no such work for him, and that if ever he insisted on it, she would walk out of the building.

“You go if you dare!” he shouted, “and if I won’t land you in jail until you’d beg to get out. Just you try it!”

Kate repaired to her room, frightened almost out of her wits at the power her brutal master, for now she regarded him as such, claimed to have over her. In removing her dress before retiring, the handkerchief she had secreted for security fell to the floor, and she picked it up and carefully examined it. It was a neat and elegantly embroidered article with some one’s initials worked upon it. Her trunk was open and she threw the relic in upon her clothing. “It may be of service to me some day. I will keep it.”

The incident of the drugged and drunken young man impressed her greatly. She had never in all her life before witnessed such a scene. To think that her life now was cast with such surroundings made her tremble when she meditated over them. “Will the Lord forgive me for such rashness? Will I ever be able to hold up my head in the face of respectable people. Will I live to ride through to the end?”

Time rolled on. Coon grew bolder in his requirements, harsher in his treatment to those under him, and more daring in his impositions upon his customers. Still, his

place continued to draw patrons, though in diminished numbers. One day a man of more than ordinary refinement for the locality came to the bar. Kate was not in the saloon at the time, but plainly saw the visitor from the "cooling-room," in which she was engaged at the time, cleaning up.

"Have you a good cigar?" he blandly inquired.

"The only kind I keep here," was the reply.

"Please let me have a couple," said the stranger as he placed a silver dollar on the counter.

"How is trade these days?" he asked.

"Pretty fair for the season," answered Coon.

"This is an excellent cigar, give me three more of them."

The stranger gave a casual glance about him, and asked, "Do you manage your place alone? I should think you would require help here to assist you."

"I do," said Coon, "but it seems hard to get any one with sense enough to keep awake around here. I need a man now, but I can't get time enough to go out and find one. Do you belong here?" asked Coon.

"I travel from place to place," replied the stranger.

"Won't you take something with me?" asked the proprietor.

"It's too early for me yet," was the reply.

"Well, come in later; we keep a nice brand of liquors and cigars," remarked Coon, steadily eyeing the diamond pin worn by the visitor.

"I may call in again before leaving town," said the stranger as he bowed to the proprietor and started out of the saloon.

"My," said Mrs. Coon, stepping up near to her husband, "he's an easy sucker; why didn't you haul him in?"

"You keep your mouth shut," replied the husband. "I'll land him before the week's over."

Katy had heard most of the foregoing conversation from her nearby retreat, her proximity not being suspected by the couple.

"I must move from this place," said the girl, "for if they knew I was listening they would be awfully rough on me." So she cautiously turned to her work in the "cooling-room," wondering.

"If we could operate a dance-hall in connection with this bar I could easily double my money," remarked the proprietor.

“You would have to get more girls,” replied his wife.

“Well, that’s easy enough done,” said Coon; “the town’s full of them.”

“What would you do with this one?”

“Make her lead the dances,” said he.

“Well, her time will be up in a few months; don’t you think you had better get her engagement renewed?”

“Don’t bother yourself about that,” said the husband, “I’ll fix that all right.”

“Why, how are you going to do it?”

“How?” he exclaimed—“I’ll make a four out of that two in her agreement, that’s all. The only thing in the world that holds me back now is the lack of room. If the owner will add to this building, I will open a dance-hall below, and a gaming-room above it; and he’s promised to do this for me.”

“My! but, Coon, you are a great man for projecting.”

“No projecting at all about it, it’s simply business.”

The conversation might have been prolonged had not two customers entered and called for drinks.

When Kate was not busy about the saloon she retired to her room and sewed, for it was about the only amusement she had

in which her heart was interested. At meal times the family were usually quiet as they sat around the table, except when a quarrel arose, which was not unusual, between the wife and husband, and especially was this the case after an over-indulgence in liquors. Mrs. Coon had easy access to the drinks at any time, and now of late was more or less under the influence of liquor the greater portion of her time.

"How about that dance-hall?" she asked at the table one day.

"They will begin the place next week, and we will be in it by Christmas. Do you know how to dance?" he asked Kate.

"Only a little," she replied, now, timidly, expecting abuse after each question put to her.

"Then you get to learning, for we are going to have dancing here next month."

"Who will do it?" asked Kate.

"Well, you for one," said Coon; "and I guess there will be no difficulty in getting you a partner."

"Well, it seems to me that would be fine, if you could get a few nice girls here and have a dance sometimes."

"That's just what I am going to do," said Coon; "have a dance here every Saturday night."

“Will you send out invitations?” asked Kate.

“You wait and see,” was the blunt reply.

One night, while Kate was handing drinks around, and receiving petty compliments from the customers, some man handed her a dollar, in addition to the regular price for his drink.

“What is this for?” she asked.

“For you,” he said.

The girl instantly tossed it back to him, and turned away. She was too busy to study its import, and too guileless to interpret its meaning even had she the time to do so. Her native instinct told her it was wrong to receive such gifts from any one in a bar-room, and she tossed it back to the giver.

Incidents like these frequently occurred, and they annoyed her. “But what can I do? How can I escape them? Where can I go?” she asked herself. One evening she was asked by a young upstart:

“Would you like to get married?”

She broke the rules on that occasion, and replied:

“Don’t you think you had better go home to your mother?”

These attentions annoyed her. “Can I endure them any longer?” In the quietude

of her little room she could for a few minutes reflect, after business hours, on what she had seen and heard below. Ordinarily, she was too fatigued and sleepy to dwell long upon them. Yet she was growing more and more resolute; more determined every day to leave. "I will risk the law," she said to herself one night. "I will even go to jail if necessary. Good people are sometimes sent there; any imprisonment would be preferable to this life. What is this but imprisonment, anyhow? Who are my associates but criminals and evildoers? Have I not seen and heard enough to convince me of the correctness of my charges. It is two months yet before my contract ceases; but oh! what mental anguish must I go through in that time! I now begin to see the wicked side of life; and they are going to add dancing to the balance; and I am to dance; and with whom? and for what? Can they mean to turn that scum into the dancing-room for me to lead them? I see through it now. My conscience now rebels. I will die before I submit to such unholy business any longer. I will seek my opportunity before that time, and fly."

CHAPTER V

“COME IN!”

The voice that uttered this invitation proceeded from a tall, slenderly built, dark-complexioned gentleman with dull, dreamy-looking eyes and a thin, black mustache. He sat alone in his little, plainly furnished office reading one of many letters that lay on his table, and motioned with his hand toward a chair, with the salutation, “Take a seat,” when his visitor entered.

Having finished his letter, Arthur Whitman, for he it was, remarked:

“Well, how can I serve you?”

“Why,” said the visitor, “I have been sent here by a person who told me you wanted some one to work for you.”

“Have you any experience in my line?”

“Yes, I have worked in the service for about three years,” was the reply.

“Whom for?”

“For a railroad company.”

“What company?”

“The Great Western.”

“In what department?”

“With the claim agent.”

“Why did you quit your employer?”

“It is most likely I lost my place with that road from the fact that I found out too much irregularity in one of the other departments, and reported it,” said the visitor. “I have, however, a letter of recommendation from the claim agent himself, which is a strong indorsement in my favor.”

“Will you let me see that letter? Well, this seems satisfactory,” said Mr. Whitman, after reading the testimonial. “Have you ever worked in a drug-store?”

“No, sir.”

“Or in a bar-room?”

“Yes,” replied the visitor, “I worked in a bar-room once for about eight months, and am familiar with that line of business.”

“Know how to put up all kinds of drinks; serve beer, and so forth?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, what I want is a young man to work for me in a saloon, and to keep his eyes wide open and his mouth shut while so employed. Do you think you can fill such a position?”

“Yes, sir; I think I could do that. I have done the same thing before.”

"Very well, then, if you can work for me along such lines as these, I can place you."

"How much do you pay for such work?" inquired the visitor.

"Are you married or single?" asked Mr. Whitman.

"Single, sir."

"Any relations living around here?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I will give you thirty dollars a month, and you may get out of the man you work under as much as you please. Do you understand?"

"I think I do, sir," said the visitor.

"Your age?"

"Twenty-one, nearly."

"You look much younger. Now here is my outline of business for you. There is a saloon doing business in this city, and the proprietor needs an assistant. I want you in this saloon, and I want you to work there in my interest. You will apply to the proprietor for the job, and he will probably accept you. It will all depend upon your experience in the business, and the wages you demand. Now, you go there when I send you, apply to the proprietor for the position as if you never had been sent there, and agree to work for him at, say, thirty dollars a month. Give him to under-

stand that if you suit him, and if his business picks up in the future, then you will expect a better remuneration. Do you understand the matter thoroughly?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I understand all you say, perfectly."

"You understand that you are working primarily for me?"

"Yes, sir."

"And that you are not to mention my name in connection with your employment?"

"Yes, sir."

"And that you are to report to me, confidentially, on anything crooked you may notice going on in that bar-room at any time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now," continued Whitman, "I think I have instructed you sufficiently to give you a trial, and if you prove yourself serviceable I can place you in some more remunerative situation later on. Go off now and think over the proposition, and return here in half an hour, and if you are then willing to go to work for me I will give you the location I wish to send you to, and will ask you one more question."

The young applicant now arose and promised to do as he had been directed.

“He’s a very particular man,” thought the applicant, “but then it is business, and no doubt he wants to put me on to some fine work, and I know from past experience that there is plenty of room for fine work in watching some of the saloon business.”

Arthur Whitman, though not over forty years of age, was an old detective. He had commenced his career in this department when quite a boy, and at the age of twenty-one had already made a splendid reputation; he had brought scores of criminals to the bench of justice, and was feared by every evil-doer in his section of the country.

He was cool, shrewd, brave and intelligent; indefatigable in the prosecution of his work, and was invariably sought after whenever it was an object to ferret out some crime. Whitman had never married, for the single reason that he had never loved but one, and that one at the time of his attentions to her was in no condition to return his love. Ella Coleman was that woman, but she had passed beyond his reach and he now supposed her dead. He still cherished her memory as a beautiful dream, and mourned her as a dear one lost.

For many months past the city of Baden from time to time had been stirred up by the perpetration of queer and unusual of-

fenses against the laws of order and decency, and many a parent had received a shock to his idea of propriety on seeing his son brought home at night in an intoxicated and unconscious condition, as well as bereft of change which it was well known he had in abundance when he left the parental roof that evening after supper.

Arthur Whitman had risen from his chair after the departure of the applicant and was pacing up and down his little office room, with hands crossed behind him, mapping out a line of procedure for his new campaign, when another knock was heard upon the office door.

Whitman advanced rapidly to the entrance, opened the door, and admitted a stranger.

"Are you Arthur Whitman of the detective force?" inquired the newcomer.

"I am, sir," was the reply.

"My name is Goodman, Mr. Whitman, and I have called on you to lay a matter before you which I think should be investigated, and if possible suppressed before more serious consequences grow out of it."

"Yes," responded the detective, "what is the trouble? By the way, have a seat, and tell me what you want."

"Well, it is just this, Mr. Whitman. I

am a merchant in this city, and I have a son. On two occasions now, in the past six months, this boy of mine has left his home to go into the city, apparently well, and he has been brought back to my house, or else he has come staggering back to it, in a state of semi-consciousness, unable to give any account of his actions during the interval he was away, and besides, without a cent in his pockets after his return, although he left home with sums of money on his person varying from ten to fifteen dollars at a time. Last night he left home to attend the theatre, with ten dollars in his pocket, and in the best of health. At ten o'clock he returned in a dazed condition, became rapidly worse; grew furious; began to shout and cry out, and had attacks of convulsions, when it became necessary to hold him down in bed, and it took three or four of us to do this successfully. I sent immediately for my family physician, and he was soon on the spot, and after working with my son for half an hour he succeeded in quieting him and restoring him to consciousness.

“I asked the physician to explain the nature of my son's attack, and he informed me that the boy had been drugged and probably robbed in some low-down bar-

room. Now, my son does not frequent such places, and as a rule never drinks anything more than a glass of beer; and how he managed to fall into such a place and get into such a fix I am utterly unable to tell."

"How old is your son?" asked the detective.

"He is eighteen years of age," replied Mr. Goodman. "Now, while I do not care particularly to be paying out fifty dollars every four months for medical services in a case like this," continued the merchant, "still, the outlay is nothing compared to the condition my son is placed in, and the disturbance it places me and my family in to see him so. Besides, a repetition of such occurrences may prove fatal at any time, or else may drive the boy into a state of permanent insanity, so said the doctor. Now, I am willing to pay liberally for the detection and suppression of such deviltry, and if you will undertake the job of ferreting out the perpetrator of such crimes and bringing him to justice I will pay you any reasonable fee. Will you undertake to do this for me," continued the merchant, "and if so, what would be your charge?"

"Yes," replied Whitman, "I will do my best to run down the guilty party, and secure his conviction, and as this work will

require some outlay on my part to do so, I will charge you three hundred dollars: one hundred down to begin on; one hundred as soon as the criminal has been committed to jail, and the balance when he or she has been convicted."

"Very good," responded the merchant, "and here is the first payment to start in on. But do you think it is possible that the perpetrator might be a woman?"

"It sometimes happens, Mr. Goodman, that the main actor in such transactions, or at any rate the chief accomplice in such crimes, is a woman."

"Well," concluded Mr. Goodman, "should you have any information for me upon this subject let me know, will you?" and with this request, the merchant seized his hat, shook hands with the detective, and hurried out.

"Well," said Whitman to himself, "this only confirms what I have been suspecting all along. This story is no surprise to me; and now, I am more convinced than ever that we have in this town as rotten a den of iniquity as could be found in any of the older metropolitan cities of the country, and possibly we may have here several of such dens. I will overtake this rascal, in time. I have been watching out myself for

some time past. Goodman's testimony is only contributory to that of others here on file in this office, and now I feel assured that I am on the proper trail."

At the date of this writing, in the early seventies, Baden was, comparatively speaking, a new and prosperous American city, of probably twenty thousand inhabitants. It was a place of call for vessels, and they discharged and took on miscellaneous cargoes, as well as passengers, at every trip. The place was emerging from the chaos of civil war which had prevailed all around it, and the machinery of municipal government was then running in an irregular and haphazard manner.

It was a new town; a live and wide-open town; and many individuals undertook to run their places of amusement in defiance of statutory law.

Baden possessed a city council, a police department, a large and fairly equipped hospital, and a fairly well-conducted and populous cemetery.

The hospital at that time had been leased by the city to Dr. Ketchum, who ran the institution more on a practical than on a scientific basis. There was none of that splendid equipment which characterizes such institutions to-day. The trained nurse

was then an unborn wonder, and the intellectual machinery that kept the place going was comparatively crude and antiquated. Dr. Ketchum kept about him a few young men who were anxious to pursue the practice of medicine, and they came to him and worked about the place in the capacity of medical internes, merely for the privilege of familiarizing themselves with the different ailments they encountered there, and to study medicine. The doctor selected the brightest of these internes, usually a graduate, to represent him in his absence, and to all he allowed the occasional privileges of prescribing for the patients, and sometimes to do a little dissecting.

Ketchum was away from the hospital much of the time, and it often happened that the students under the house doctor ran the place for days at a time along lines laid down by their venerable preceptor. Most of the patients were of the laboring class, and whenever a case of unusual severity was admitted, Dr. Ketchum was summoned to come out from the city and direct its treatment.

Such, then, is a brief description of the City Hospital of Baden, and of its management in the early seventies. It was the only institution of its kind in the city.

There was no rivalry against it then, and the community seemed very well satisfied with the manner in which it was conducted.

This digression is necessary in order to prepare the reader for occurrences which will be introduced later on, and we will now return to the detective.

Arthur Whitman continued to walk up and down the floor after Goodman had left his office. While thus engaged the applicant for work returned, knocked at the door, and was admitted.

"Well, will you take the job I offered you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then here are your directions. Go to the place named on this envelope, and get to work as soon as possible, and after you secure your position and get your start, come back here and report to me."

"Yes, sir."

"Finally, what is your name?" asked Whitman.

"Paul Jones, sir," was the reply.

CHAPTER VI

NELLIE BLY sat by the window in the parlor of her quiet little home in Charleston, watching the passers-by and wondering why the object of her expectation was so tardy in putting in his promised appearance.

“Here have I been watching for the past two hours, eagerly waiting, and scanning the faces of approaching forms; and yet with few exceptions those who hurried by have all been total strangers or casual acquaintances. He wrote to me a week ago that by one o’clock to-day, at the latest, I might expect him at the house; and now it is almost three.

“Could Harry have touched at the port and gone on without calling to see me to say good-by? No, it would be unlike him; his boat must have been delayed, and I have just that confidence in him to feel assured that he will come and see me before venturing on his extended and indefinite trip out West.”

Nellie Bly was the only daughter of a

widow whom the circumstances of war had compelled to forego the luxuries of her former life, and run a small but fashionable boarding-house in order to earn an honorable existence. None but select people were ever taken under her roof, either as guests or as boarders, and it was in the capacity of the latter class that Harry Benson had formed the acquaintance of the Bly family and had, in the course of time, won the heart of the widow's pretty daughter.

They loved each other with the usual consequences, and the couple were now only waiting for Harry to better his financial condition, when they expected to consummate their pledges of love before some accepted minister, and go to housekeeping.

Nellie was eighteen, and decidedly pretty; was of medium size, and possessed a lovely disposition and beautiful black eyes.

Her father had been a man of means and prominence in Charleston during his life, and his daughter had been reared in luxury and refinement. Mr. Bly had died some years before. The civil war had well-nigh swamped the little fortune of the family, and, as just stated, Mrs. Bly, in order to earn an honest and independent existence, had, like thousands of other excellent women in the South, determined to carry on a

first-class, fashionable, and refined boarding-house. Nellie was full of fun, truthful and honest, and was an accomplished musician. In her disposition, however, she was reserved, though confiding in those she loved.

Harry Benson, her lover, was her antipode in disposition. He was open, jovial, warm-hearted to his friends, whole-souled, genial, generous to a fault, hail-fellow wherever met, and always wore a half smile on his face while not asleep.

Harry was a drummer, and represented a large New England house, and his specialty was coffee. What he did not know about coffee was not worth inquiring after. He could tell more about the bean, probably, than any man on the road or even off of it; and for this very knowledge he was held in high esteem by Baker, Brown and Buster, importers and manufacturers of first-class coffees, and given their confidence and a liberal salary while representing them. Harry had been working the field of South Carolina, in the early seventies, but on account of his extraordinary success in making sales and drawing customers for his employers, he had been assigned to a new and larger territory farther west, and at the time that Nellie sat

looking for him at the parlor window, he was then en route to operate his new and untried field.

“Oh! there he comes now,” said the joyful girl as she ran with a smile on her beautiful face, and opened the door to admit him.

“Why, Harry, what kept you so long? I’ve been at the window watching for you for over an hour.” And she threw herself into his big, manly arms as she kissed him.

“Why, Nellie, my darling,” said Harry, depositing his sample case on the floor, “we were late in arriving—an occurrence that often takes place when traveling on a steamship; and besides that, I could not resist the temptation to run in on old Slocum, after arriving here, and sell him a cargo of coffee. Yes, Nellie, just think of it, fifty-five sacks of the best grade of Java, without saying anything about ten sacks of our ‘Connecticut Blend.’ Why, do you know that the commissions on such a sale amount to over one hundred and fifty dollars for your best friend and yourself? Now, Nellie, how is the sample package working I sent down to you from New York last month? Do you know, miss, that coffee brings more happiness into the human family than any other agency, the Bible itself

not excepted. No one is worth a cent in the morning until he or she has swallowed down a cupful of coffee. No battle was ever won, no great sermon ever preached or powerful undertaking ever accomplished without the aid of coffee.

“Nellie, you are making a mistake by not taking a cup of ‘Connecticut Blend’ every day of your life, before sunrise. Try it. See what it has done for me. You know two years ago I only weighed one hundred and fifty pounds, and now I am ashamed of myself. One hundred and seventy, and all due mostly to coffee. Coffee is the staff of life, Nellie. You can work half a day on a cup of good coffee, but on no other beverage we know of. But I am off the track. Nellie, how have you been since I kissed you last?”

“Oh, Harry, don’t put it that way. You mean how have I been since you saw me last. Splendid!”

“It’s about the same thing, Nellie,” said Harry, “for you know every time I see you I—er—er—sell you a package of ‘Connecticut Blend’ with etceteras. Say, Nellie, don’t you think it’s a pretty afternoon’s job to unload ten sacks of ‘Connecticut Blend’ on old Slocum?”

“Harry,” replied Nellie, “I know noth-

ing of your business methods. If you say it was a good afternoon's job to unload ten sacks of 'Connecticut Blend' on old Slocum, then I know it was a successful business enterprise. I don't know what 'Connecticut Blend' is. I have never tasted it, nor indeed ever heard of it, until now."

"Great Heavens, Nellie! never heard of 'Connecticut Blend,' and engaged for six months to its inventor and promoter? That's a good one. Why, here is a sample; look at it; taste of it; smell it. Did you ever in all your life smell a more delicious aroma; isn't it heavenly; doesn't it intoxicate your senses?"

"Why, Harry, this isn't coffee at all; it is pulverized cedar."

"By the Great Horn Block! Nellie, you must have a cold in your head. Give me that package; let me smell it. Why, see here; the sample hasn't been properly blended," replied Harry. "They have simply dumped in a package of sub-blended coffee upon me. But here," added he, "smell this," as he threw in and incorporated a handful of genuine coffee with the other. Now smell something better than attar of roses. Isn't that grand for a coffee?"

"This is all right now, Harry, but to tell

you the truth the first that you gave me to smell was nothing but cedar.”

“Now, see here, Nellie, how is your mother? Did you surely want to see me while I was away? But to get back to coffee. You know, Nellie, there are only two things in the world I ever think of at night, and one is yourself and the other is coffee. Sometimes you come first, sometimes coffee does.”

“Harry, won’t you let up on coffee a little and talk to me?” implored Nellie.

“Why, certainly, dear; but hurry up with your questions; the boat only gave me an hour and a half to be absent, and half of that time is already gone.”

“Well, Harry, don’t you think I come in before coffee, on occasions like this?”

“See here, Nellie—coffee comes first, for this reason: You know our speedy marriage depends on my financial success. If I can make a hit at coffee, my only chance of success, you are there; if I fail at it, then where are you? So with you ostensibly in the background, but really in front, I am going to talk coffee until my lips get blistered, or else miss the mark I am shooting at. My intense desire to see you to-day, dearest, cut me out of a sale of at least twenty sacks. Just think of it. Fifty dol-

lars in commissions turned down to see Nellie Bly for just thirty minutes! Why, this is over one dollar a minute to look at your beautiful face."

"Yes, and half of this time is already gone in talking about coffee," said Nellie.

"Because," answered Harry, "I am posted much better on coffee than I am on the Bly family, just at present."

"And you leave in an hour, do you, Harry?" she asked him. "And when am I ever to hear from you after you leave; or where will I write to you, dear?"

"As for that Nellie, I leave pretty soon, and will write to you often; that is, I'll manage to let you know where I am, how progressing, and where you may find me by letter. If my venture succeeds, then I will be here again in three months, and will make you Mrs. Benson."

"And if you do not?" inquired Nellie.

"Then, in four months, at latest, you will see me. But I am not going to fail, Nellie Bly, and you may just as well now be embroidering N. B. on your handkerchiefs, as to wait until then."

"Why, Harry, those initials are on everything that I own; so you see I am really ready whenever you come back again."

"Why, that's so," answered Mr. Benson; "how stupid I am on everything except coffee! Now, Nellie, I must leave you, and before doing so I want you to accept this trifling memento of my love and respect for you. Here is a ten-dollar gold piece, and there's no telling how many trinkets, or extracts, or what-nots it might bring you; or boxes of candy or milk shakes, or anything else you might fancy."

"Oh, Harry, you are always so kind and so generous; but as much as I love you I would not dare accept money from you at this moment."

"And why, little girl, are you afraid of it?"

"Not at all, Harry, but I do not consider it proper for young ladies to accept such gifts from gentlemen; anything else, except money."

"And we engaged, too!" he replied.

"Yes, even under such conditions, it does not seem proper; for no lady elevates herself in the esteem and respect of a man who walks off with his money."

"Under different circumstances, Nellie, I will admit the truth of such reasoning, for no man respects a young lady who he knows is hanging around for what gifts she can filch from him, and there are hundreds who

are artists in this business; but with you the case is entirely different. You are mine and you know it, as I am your prospective husband—and it seems to me where there is no impropriety in taking a kiss there certainly ought to be none in taking a present from a gentleman.”

“A kiss is an exchange of love between an honorable couple when betrothed,” said Nellie; “it is mutual and free from all sordid motives. There is nothing mercenary or selfish in a kiss; but not so in the case of material gifts, and especially with money. No, Harry, you would love me more to feel that I declined your gold, but treasured more than any jewel the honest love you have for me.”

“My darling little girl, you are priceless, and I think more of you now than ever.”

“But, Harry, I will do this for you, if you think it well—I have a rare coin which I value just as much as though its worth were ten times greater, an antique silver dollar, and I will exchange with you if you do not object.”

“It’s a bargain, Nell, and each will keep the coin as a souvenir as long as his or her love remains.”

Nellie withdrew from her pocketbook the

coin in question, and Harry transferred his gold piece to her in exchange.

"Keep it," she said, "as long as you love me, and I will do likewise with yours."

"By the skies above us, Nellie, it shall never pass from my hands as long as I live! But see! It is marked; here are I. C. U. cut upon it. Why, I can never look on this piece of silver without actually bringing you face to face with me. It's a speaking photograph;" and he clasped his pocket-book upon it and stored it away with his treasures.

"And now, Nellie, before leaving you I am going to sing you a little song which I composed on my way from New York, and put to my own music." And Harry sang her the following verses:

"I am going far away, Nellie Bly, Nellie Bly,
To the golden West I go in search of fame;
I will see you in my dreams, don't you cry, don't
you cry,
And will come some day and give you my own
name.

"I am going to the West, Nellie Bly, Nellie Bly,
In search of fame and fortune for your sake;
I will come again, my darling, by and by, by and
by,
And your hand and heart forever will I take.

"Now kiss me, little darling, Nellie Bly, Nellie Bly,
As a token of the love within your heart;

And sometimes think of Harry, with a sigh, with
a sigh—

We will be together soon, to never part.

“We will be together, darling, by and by, by and by,
When the ship comes sailing home upon the
deep;

To be together always till we die, till we die—
So kiss me, darling, and we will not weep.’”

“Bravo! Harry; but listen, some one rings; let me run to the door and see who it is.” And she hastened to answer the door bell.

“Good-evening, Miss Bly,” exclaimed a determined-looking stranger at the door. “Is Mr. Harry Benson in?”

“Yes,” she replied; “do you wish to see him?”

“For a moment only, and with your permission I will step in.” The intruder followed Nellie, without formality, and exclaimed, “How do you do, Mr. Benson?” shaking his hand cordially.

“What’s the name, please?” inquired Harry.

“Cheek’s my name, Mr. Benson, and I only dropped in for a minute to see you on something very vital to your interest. I saw by the passenger list of the New York steamer that you were here on your way to the West, and I followed you up to this

beautiful place, and realizing what you must necessarily go through with in your peregrinations in that wild and woolly country I have dropped in to write you an accident policy."

"The Hades you have!" exclaimed Benson, hurriedly. "Who told you I wanted an accident policy?"

"My knowledge of human nature. It's a duty you owe to yourself, Mr. Benson, and to any one else dependent upon you."

"I don't want any insurance, and don't believe in it, anyway," said Harry.

"Just the reason I called," said the stranger. "You see, I know your necessities better than you do yourself. Do you realize where you are going; what you are going to encounter; the enormous percentage of accidents and injuries that overtake the traveler through the unknown West; the almost certain illness that awaits you out there? Do you know that every third man, woman, or child who visits the West either gets killed, receives an injury, or else gets sick within the first sixty days after sojourning out in that country? Now, you want to be prepared against all such contingencies. You want to be insured against almost certain illness, accident or death, and our company issues policies to

cover each and all of these conditions. Now let me write you a cheap policy to cover all of these inevitables: to cover illness, sure to overtake you; accident, very possible; loss of limb and worse still, possibly loss of life. Ours is the strongest company in the world, the Great New York & London Sickness, Accident, and Life Insurance Company. Capital paid in, thirty million dollars; pays 101 cents on the dollar on all its obligations; and our motto is to 'Go for the traveler,' and especially for one about to enter the great and unknown West, where the chances of sickness or accident, to say nothing whatever of death, are always against you."

"See here, Mr. Cheek," replied Benson, warmly, "I'll be goldarned if you don't deserve your name. You have pursued me into the secluded home of a lady, forced me up against the wall of her private parlor, and in spite of my protest against your interference you are now trying to cram down my throat one of your damnable accident policies, for which I have no use, and in which I have no confidence."

"Mr. Benson," exclaimed Mr. Cheek, "you cannot deny the sincerity of my motives, nor the value of insurance. It costs you but little; the benefits, if needed at all,

will be incalculable. Think of the country, sir, you are now about to enter; the outlaws; the Comanches with their tomahawks; the rattlesnakes, scorpions, tarantulas, and Gila monsters. Think of the deadly fevers; typhus, typhoid-malarial, yellow and backbone fevers which prevail there all the year round. Think of the Ku Klux Klan; the "White Camelias," and above all, of the deadly "Strangers' Committee." Finally and above all, Mr. Benson, think of the horrible coyotes, those western hyenas that sneak up and run away with their victims on the very suburbs of some of the western cities. What a terrible fate to be eaten up by coyotes, Mr. Benson! What would your mother and sweetheart think of you if such a fate should overtake you, and you not insured against such common accidents? Now, Mr. Benson, we allow you five dollars each for the loss of a finger; fifty for the loss of a hand; one hundred for the loss of an arm, and two hundred dollars for the loss of a leg."

"By the powers above!" said Harry. "I would not take fifty thousand apiece for them, and you wish to buy them up for two hundred dollars apiece. To Hades with such indemnity!"

"But stop," said Cheek; "listen! All this indemnity, and even more, for the paltry sum of five dollars premium a month, and for which we would pay your beneficiaries one thousand dollars if you died. Pay us ten dollars a month and all these figures will be doubled; fifteen dollars a month and they will be trebled, etc."

"What proofs of death do you require, before paying your policies?" asked Benson.

"A coroner's certificate, or that of some physician, sworn to before a notary public," said Cheek.

"Who will furnish the evidence of death if the coyotes eat me?" inquired the drummer.

"Why, your companions, of course."

"I don't believe in it," said Benson.

"Think of your life, Mr. Benson," said Cheek, now pressing him down in the corner. "Think of the Comanches; think of the coyotes," said he, raising his voice and closing down upon him. "The coyotes, the coyotes, Mr. Benson," shouted Cheek.

"Oh, Harry, the coyotes, dear; the coyotes!" cried Nellie.

"To hell with your coyotes! Let me out of here!" shouted Benson.

"Oh, Harry, take it, take it!" implored Nellie. "It might save you your life."

"See here, stranger, you are a slick one. On Nellie's account I'll take out a one thousand life policy in her favor. It is cheaper to do so than to burn up my time listening to your jargon. Write it out; but by the Great Horn Block! I am going to make you drink coffee for it."

"What's that, Mr. Benson?" inquired Cheek, calmly, while writing out his policy.

"See here, my friend, I am a drummer myself, and when it comes to a show-down on coffee, I am as good as you are on insurance. Now here's two dollars and a half on your policy, and the balance you will take out in coffee."

"What's that?" said Cheek. "Why, I don't need coffee, Mr. Benson; don't drink it; and besides, I don't believe it's healthy."

"Mr. Cheek, you are a gifted young man, but you have much to learn yet. And one thing you are defective in is your knowledge of coffee. Now, I am in that line; represent the biggest coffee house in the United States,—that of Baker, Brown & Buster,—and we carry the finest lines of imported and manufactured coffees in the world. Our 'Connecticut Blend' is sur-

passed by no coffee in existence. It's a tonic, stimulant, sedative, calmer of disturbed thoughts, and promoter of intelligence; produces brilliant thoughts, and enables brain workers to do five times more business under its influence than without it. Now, you want ten pounds of this coffee for your own use, and if you have not advanced high enough to drink coffee yet, begin at once, and grow wiser and more energetic; and if you have no aspirations that way, give it to your landlady or your mother-in-law, or sell it at an advance of 50 per cent. to some one."

"I would take your coffee, Mr. Benson, but my doctor has warned me against drinking strong coffee on account of my nerves."

"Oh, you are in no danger there; your nerves will stick. And our 'Blend,' totally unlike all other coffee in the world, was made for men and women who were threatened to break down prematurely. Give a package to your doctor—it will enlighten him."

"What do you call it?"

"'Connecticut Blend.' Here, take your ten bundles for two and a half and go."

"And now, Nellie, my time is all up—I must run to catch my boat. Here, keep the

policy, it's made out for you; and give this kiss to mamma for me, and keep this for yourself as a parting salute from your lover."

CHAPTER VII

HARRY BENSON barely had time to catch his steamer. The blades were already in motion, and sailors were tugging away at the gang-plank when he reached the wharf. He was hauled aboard, however, and a minute later the great coaster Empress had backed out into the channel and was turning her prow around toward the southwest.

"That fellow Cheek did it," murmured Harry, as he entered the cabin and deposited his sample case.

The ship had a good list of passengers aboard, several of whom had gotten on at Charleston, and the drummer's first duty to himself seemed to be the forming of their acquaintance.

Shortly after six supper was announced, and most of the travelers sat down to enjoy their evening meal, while the great vessel ploughed through the waves with her prow pointed directly towards the fading tint on the horizon in front of her.

Harry finished his supper, after indulg-

ing in one or two discourses on the subject of coffee to his new acquaintances, several of whom admitted that until then they had lived in ignorance concerning it. Then it occurred to him that he had much to think about; business plans to modify and perfect; and he lit a cigar and wandered out to the extremity of the vessel's prow, where he found a chair, in order to indulge in a little business meditation. In this plan, however, he was destined to be interrupted, and in a manner which he had not calculated on. The moon was shining brightly in the east, and the atmosphere about was cool, bracing, and inviting. Each splash of the waves as they broke against the vessel's prow caused cascades of watery diamonds to fall on either side.

"It's a lovely scene," thought Harry, "and if I only had Nellie here to enjoy it with me, I would be the happiest man on the hemisphere." He drew his memorandum book from his pocket, and was endeavoring by the light of the moon to make some entries for the day. He had about completed this undertaking, and had thrown up his head for some new inspiration, when, to his surprise, he beheld standing near him the neatly dressed form of a beautiful woman.

"Excuse me, madam," exclaimed the drummer, "let me offer you this chair."

"I thank you, sir, I would not deprive you of your seat."

"No deprivation, but an honor to me, madam, to have you occupy it," saying which, Harry mildly insisted that the lady rest herself, while he would find another chair elsewhere.

"You were enjoying the breeze, just what I desired to do," replied the beautiful lady, "and rather than deprive you of such pleasure I will retire to my stateroom."

"You need do neither, madam, for if you will allow me, I will bring another chair and continue my enjoyment of the beautiful evening, where I was when I found you; may I do so?"

"Your request is so modest and artless, I do not well see how I could possibly refuse it," replied the lady.

Harry ran and secured a chair, and placing it beside that of his new and attractive acquaintance soon found himself in active conversation with her.

"So you are going to visit the West, as well as myself," said he.

"Yes, I have a little vacation given to me, and I thought I would use it by visiting that section of the country."

"How far do you go?" he asked.

"As far as Baden."

"Why, I go directly to that port myself," said Mr. Benson.

"Yes?" she replied; "why, that's a charming coincidence. Inasmuch as we are travelers aboard the same vessel and going to the same port, might I inquire your name and occupation?"

"Madam," replied Benson, "here is my life epitomized in three lines, and it might have been put in two." He handed her his card, which she scanned by the light of the moon, and read, "Harry Benson, representing Baker, Brown & Buster, Coffee Importers, New York."

"Oh, you are a traveling man, I see."

"Yes," replied the commercial agent, "I represent probably the largest importing house in the country."

"But what a euphonious firm name," exclaimed the lady; "and yet I have seen the identical card before."

"Very likely," replied the drummer, "for they are scattered all over the country. That combination of names alone is worth fifty thousand dollars a year to us. Why, do you know, a capitalist named Burnet came to our house the other day and wanted to buy out Mr. Baker's interest in

the firm, simply to get his name on our card. As a matter of course we turned him down."

"What line of goods do you carry, Mr. Benson?" inquired the fair one.

"Only coffee," he replied, "though sometimes we handle a few spices and mustards. We deal in the finest grades of these articles in the world. Java, Mocha, West Indian, South American, Mexican and domestic brands are on our list, and besides these we manufacture more coffee right at home than probably any other house in the country."

"Manufacture coffee? Mr. Benson; why, I thought," exclaimed the beautiful lady, "that all coffee grew out of the ground."

"There's where your coffee education," replied the drummer, "is defective. The finest drinking coffee in the world," continued he, "is made in the workshops of Connecticut, and I am agent for the manufacturers. Nothing on earth approximates our 'Connecticut Blend' in flavor. It's a mixture of all the grades of coffee grown under the sun, and if you have never used it, madam, I must ask that you call for it wherever you stop in the future. It possesses the aroma of Mocha, the delicious flavor of Java, and the powerful strength

and tonicity of Rio. To these we add a special product of our own, making it a 'Blend' fit for the tables of the crowned heads of the world. Call for it wherever you stop, in the future, and be sure to see that it is 'Connecticut Blend' they are serving you."

"I certainly will do so, Mr. Benson, for I am much interested in coffee, and I know of nothing more acceptable than a cup of *café noir* before rising in the morning. While out in Australia, last season, I had the pleasure of riding through a large coffee plantation owned by a wealthy Englishman, and it interested me very much. And while in China I gathered some tea plants and brought them along with me to America, thinking that they might do well in this country, but they became troublesome to handle and I left them in Charleston behind me."

"Well, madam, these incidents alone are sufficient to make me very much interested in you, and I trust that we may be good friends all along the trip."

"I see no reason why we should not be," she responded. "Are you married, Mr. Benson?"

"Well, do I look like a married man?"

"Why, to tell the truth I should say no."

"You are right, madam. I am not, but I expect to be within the next few months; and one of my reasons for going ashore at Charleston was to see the ideal of my heart and say good-by to her; likewise to sing to her a few stanzas I composed on my way down from New York."

"Are you a musician then, Mr. Benson?"

"Only in a small capacity, madam; but the fact is I attended the grand opera in New York a few weeks ago, and ever since then I have had music running through my mind both day and night."

"What did you think of the opera, Mr. Benson?"

"I thought it the greatest treat of my life. I was carried away with the music, and infatuated with the soprano. Why, do you know I sent up to that lady a ten-dollar bouquet in appreciation for her beautiful music."

"Why, Mr. Benson," exclaimed the lady, with a loud, ringing laugh, "would you believe that I was the very lady whom you sent those flowers to?"

"By the Great Horn Block!" exclaimed Benson, springing up with amazement. "Is that so? I am speechless! I am paralyzed! You the prima donna of that great opera company, and I the humble coffee drummer

presuming to sit here and chat with her? Why, surely this is a dream—a delicious intoxication of the senses. How comes it you are away from your company and traveling alone to Baden, on a steamship? How comes it you are sitting here in the moonlight chatting with a coffee drummer?"

"I will tell you, Mr. Benson, you have fairly won my confidence, and as we are traveling to the same place I will briefly acquaint you with my story, and possibly enlist your assistance later on. My former home was in Baden, where I left my only child, seven years ago. She was a beautiful girl, ten years of age, and I placed her in an orphanage there, on account of my inability to care for her, while I went abroad to Europe to take up singing for a livelihood. I triumphed in my tedious efforts; joined the opera company you heard me sing in; toured the entire world, and a few weeks ago landed in this country. We sang last night in Charleston, and this very day I secured a ten days' vacation, in order to run down to Baden and see my darling child. I do not even know if she is living, for I have not heard from her for years. I have written often to her, during the past two years, but my letters have never been

replied to; and it makes me sad to think of such a possibility as her death."

"We will find her," said Benson, enthusiastically, "and if I can assist you in your search for her it will be a pleasure for me to do so. What was your daughter's name?"

"Kate Coleman," was the answer. "And she was a perfect blonde, with lovely blue eyes, and golden ringlets falling to her shoulders. Whether she is at the orphanage or elsewhere now, I do not know; but one thing I am determined on, if she is living, I will find her, and we will live together in the future, as I planned we should do if I succeeded, many years ago."

"Your dream of happiness shall be realized, if I can help you. Have you determined where you shall stay while in Baden?" asked Benson.

"Yes, at the Metropolitan," she replied. "It was the best hotel in the city when I left there, seven years ago."

"It is the best there yet," said the drummer, "and the one I intend to stop at while in that city."

Twilight had by this time long since faded into night. Ella Coleman rose to retire to her apartment, fearful lest too long

exposure to the humid air might impair her cultured voice.

“Are you going so soon?” he asked her.

“Yes, but I will see you in the morning again.”

As she stood upon the vessel's prow, robed in a beautiful tailor-made gown, with a blue cape thrown about her perfect shoulders, Benson thought she looked divine. Before them the dancing waves sparkled in the moonlight and splashed against the vessel as she rode the waters like a thing of life. Behind them two great black streamers of smoke poured from the funnels of the speeding ship and mingled with the sea below.

“Good-night, Mr. Benson. I am so thankful to have met you, and to know that I will have your company as far as Baden.”

CHAPTER VIII

PAUL JONES had been working at The Crescent now for nearly three weeks. He had applied to Coon for the situation, as directed, and had been closely scanned and questioned by the proprietor before his acceptance.

"Have you ever worked at this business before?" he was asked.

"I have, sir."

"Do you know how to keep your mouth shut and your hands busy at the same time?"

"I do, sir."

"Do you know how to keep your eyes shut and your mouth open at the same time?" asked Mr. Coon.

"I think I do, sir," was the reply.

"Well, there's no thinking about it," said the saloonman. "You've got it to do at times in this business, and I won't employ you or anybody else unless I am to be obeyed and all the rules of this house followed."

"I will obey your rules and follow your orders as long as I am with you," replied Paul.

"Well, what do you want for your services?"

"Twenty-five dollars a week, sir."

"Oh, that's too much entirely. Do you want to break me up in business? I'll give you fifteen a week and no more."

"We will not quarrel over the salary," said Jones. "Let it go at fifteen dollars a week."

"All right," said Coon complaisantly, as he felt that he was a gainer of ten dollars a week on his bargain. "Get behind here and put on an apron and go to work."

Paul soon convinced his employer that he understood his work. He was quick, polite to customers, and what pleased old Coon better than anything else, he was quiet.

"Now, you will come on at ten in the morning and stay here until ten at night, except on Saturdays, when you will stay here and work until twelve. You can take half an hour off for your dinner and supper."

Paul worked away quietly at his job, and never seemed to see or hear anything beyond the counter. At times Coon would be

absent himself, when his assistant would suddenly wake up and take observations.

"His beer keg sits back in a transept, something I never saw anywhere else," said Paul to himself, "and I notice he is completely out of sight of his customers at the tables when he draws them the beer. Now, this must mean something."

Paul had caught sight of the girl, and she of him. A mutual admiration sprang up between them on the instant, and Coon had caught sight of the glance.

"You just keep your eyes off that girl," he exclaimed emphatically. "She's my daughter, and I allow no talking to her. Not a word!"

The young man nevertheless caught many an occasional glance of her, and she of him.

"That girl is no more his daughter than I am," thought Paul. "There's not the slightest resemblance to either him or his wife, who is a depraved old hag. There's something wrong here, sure."

Shortly after this two young men came to the saloon one evening, and sat down to drink beer and play dominoes. Kate was alternately at the piano and engaged in handing around drinks. They were of a

little better class than usually came there to spend their money.

"Here, bring us two beers and a package of cigarettes," said one of them, addressing Kate, as he handed her a five-dollar bill.

"Here, take out the change," said Coon to Paul, "while I draw them the beer."

The young man did as directed, making a great rattle with his silver as he sought out the proper change. With the dexterity of a bank teller he rolled out the money, but took occasion to watch his employer's movements very carefully. Kate stood in front of the counter with her waiter, watching the young bartender.

"By George!" said Jones, silently, "he's dropped something into one of the glasses."

It was all done in an instant, and Paul was busily engaged in getting out his change when the drinks were passed over the counter. In a few minutes the beverage got in its work and began to tell in a disgraceful manner upon its victim at the table. The beardless customer grew flushed and hilarious, boasted of the deception he was practicing on his parents, who imagined him at that time in better company, and soon afterwards became maudling

drunk. He reeled about the room, tried to catch and kiss Katie, and then fell on the floor. Mr. and Mrs. King ran sympathetically to the boy, and started off with him to the "cooling-room." His companion essayed to follow.

"You need not bother about him," insisted the couple, "we will lay him on the sofa, in the back room, where he can sleep it off."

"I will stay by him until he recovers," said his companion.

"Very good in you, if you will," said Mr. Coon. "We will remove his coat, so as to make him more comfortable, also his trousers."

The two young men reached their respective homes about three o'clock in the morning, and the victim of the doctored drink found to his dismay that all his last month's salary was gone. He was mortified and ashamed to acknowledge his loss to any one, and the robbery was never reported.

Kate and the young bartender exchanged significant glances with each other. Each felt instinctively that an outrage had been perpetrated, yet each feared to speak to the other as to the matter. Mr. and Mrs. Coon returned in a few minutes to the

drinking-room, looking as unconcerned as though they were just in from their dinner.

As soon as his time was up that night, Paul went immediately to Whitman's office, which was always accessible up to a late hour every night, and reported.

"Well, anything to communicate?" asked the detective softly.

"I think so," was the reply. Jones then clearly related his observations while at The Crescent, and revealed his suspicions. He mentioned the presence of the beautiful girl, and of the proprietor's objections to any conversation between them, and of the dissimilarity in every respect between the girl and her reputed parents.

"These are two very suspicious circumstances," remarked Whitman, "and will bear a little more investigating. Try to get an interview with the girl, and endeavor to get clear on her identity. Do not, however, be precipitate about the matter, lest we lose the trail we are working on. She might be an accomplice herself, and if you were ever suspected of watching them you would be discharged from there forever."

When Jones related the incident of the drunken boy and what he observed in connection with the case, then Walter Whitman straightened up and exclaimed:

“If this be so we have at last cornered a consummate scoundrel as well as a dangerous criminal, and I will now resort to more active measures to capture him. Did you ascertain this young man’s name, or his address?”

“No,” replied Jones, “under the circumstances it was impracticable for me to do so without risking my identity at the place.”

“It is well,” remarked Whitman; “preserve your identity, whatever you do, until you are absolutely sure of your game, then boldly announce it. Now, return as usual to the place, and watch all the movements of the proprietor and his wife, and whenever you observe anything important again, come and tell me of it.”

Paul Jones went to his place of business next day, as usual, and immediately assumed the listless, dreamy attitude which always characterized him while at work. Kate came and went, and yet her presence never seemed to evoke the slightest degree of curiosity on his part. He saw her often enough, however, to read her thoroughly.

Coon’s back was often turned; sometimes the proprietor was compelled to be momentarily absent from the saloon—on which occasions Paul never failed to make

extended observations. "She's a beautiful girl, and comes from better stock than those presiding here. She has been well raised by some one, and has a sweet, sad face. If I was only certain that she was not related in any manner to these two old brutes who seem to own this business, I would surely interpose my authority and rescue her from her horrible surroundings."

On the other hand, Kate had studied the face of the assistant, and had casually noted his reserved and kindly disposition. "He has a good face," she thought, "and an air of gentleness about him. He seems entirely different in his manners from all around here. I believe he is a gentleman, I believe he is a friend. I never see him take a drink, nor hear him use an improper word. I would like so much to speak to him and seek his aid in getting me away from here; for now this place has become unbearable, and if I thought I had to remain here another month I would court death rather than submit to further degradation and imprisonment."

The girl began to fade like a tender flower too roughly handled. Her usual spirits and vivacity had disappeared, and in their place a melancholy gloom had

gathered about her former animated features. In her mechanical performances at the piano she seemed to be in a dream. In her meanderings amongst the votaries of the saloon she always seemed listless and wandering mentally on some far-off topic. Just as soon as she could be spared from the services of her tyrannical owners, she would hie herself upstairs to her room and sit with folded hands, for several minutes, plotting and planning how to shake off the miserable and deceptive yoke which had been laid so heavily on her tender neck. She was unusually disheartened on this particular night, and it was after eleven. She had heard Mrs. Coon, that very evening, make allusion to her further stay in her degrading position. She did not catch its meaning thoroughly; yet enough had been heard to cause her suspicions of prolonged imprisonment to be aroused. She had lived for months on the hope of release at the end of her contract time. Now this hope flickered in the lamp feebly burning in her breast.

“Can it be possible they will keep me here beyond my time? Can it be possible that I am to be their slave in this iniquity forever?” The addition to The Crescent—the dance hall—would be completed with-

in the next three days, and the place then would be thrown open to the vulgar and dissipated habitues of the saloon that very week; and she had been told of the part she was to play in this advanced degree of questionable pleasure.

“Never!” she said aloud. “I am determined. My plan is settled. ‘When your conscience rebels against a contemplated act, fly from its commission.’ This was the last advice ever poured into my ears by an honest being, and I will follow it if it leads me to eternity. In all this big and broad world there must be hearts pure enough and hands strong enough to shield an orphan girl. I know not where they are, but I will fly from this despicable place and seek them.”

CHAPTER IX

IT WAS the last day in November, and the soft rays of the evening sun made its warmth acceptable to all humanity, and the passengers of the great western coaster had strolled on deck to enjoy the landing scene, which was soon to take place. The Empress had blown her landing whistle; her great blades had ceased their revolutions, and she was drifting up to her accustomed berth, while a multitude of upturned faces on the shore, including a number of detectives, stared eagerly at the party of strangers standing aloft ready to disembark. Amongst the latter, side by side, stood Ella Coleman and the drummer.

“Mr. Benson, you do not know how I have enjoyed your company since the evening I made your acquaintance at Charleston.”

“I suppose I never will, Mrs. Coleman, but one thing I do know, and it is this—your enjoyment can never equal that of mine, nor will it be tinged with as many

regrets at parting as I forsee ahead of me for many days to come in leaving you."

"I will still see you for a while at the hotel, though, will I not?" asked the lady.

"Most assuredly you will, and I am going to bring that little girl of yours to you, if she can be found in the land."

"Heaven grant that we may be successful, Mr. Benson, in our search; and if I do succeed I will make you the happiest man in America for your disinterested service in behalf of me and my child."

A momentary thrill went through the vessel at this instant, as she struck the wharf, and Benson, with an armful of bundles, band-boxes, and animated bird cages, led the way ashore, the prima donna of the great Italian opera company following closely behind him.

"Take this lady to the Metropolitan," directed Harry to the hackman, and wait on her for further orders."

"Will you not go up with me?" she inquired.

"No, not yet," was the reply. "Why, I propose to sell a dozen sacks of coffee before the sun goes down; and it may be late before you see me. I will meet you, at any rate, in the morning, when I hope to have the pleasure of joining you and your

little daughter at the breakfast table. Now, see here! don't forget what I told you about 'Connecticut Blend.' Call for it wherever you go, won't you?"

Mrs. Coleman drove off to the hotel, where she registered, secured a comfortable room, and deposited her boxes and cages. When this had been accomplished, she directed the hackman to drive to the orphanage and wait for her there. Harry Benson, with his sample case, strolled leisurely on to the business part of the city. He was happy over almost everything he could think of, and walked along planning out the work he had before him for the evening. He was conscious that he had landed in a territory altogether new to him. He was unconscious of the fact that he was walking straight into one of the most horrible fates that could probably ever overtake any human being. And that fate then was near at hand.

He reached the main business thoroughfare of Baden, but on its western extremity.

"Ah, this is Commerce street, and as I have some customers to interview residing on it, I will saunter along and look out for them. "Why, this is considerable of a city, and I should sell these people at least a hundred sacks before leaving here."

“By the way,” said Harry, “I am as dry as a chip, and here’s a saloon with an attractive name to it.” Saying which he entered The Crescent.

There was an air of freshness and buoyancy about him as he entered, and his elegant watch charm dangling from an excellent, well-fitting waistcoat pronounced him at once to be a new and well-to-do visitor. Old Coon’s murderous eyes spotted him as soon as he entered, and he squared himself, prepared for business.

“Have you some fresh beer on hand?” asked Harry.

“Some just tapped,” answered the proprietor.

“Well, I just feel like I could empty a schooner,” said Harry.

“You had better take a seat at the table there,” said Coon, “as the beer is fresh and it will take a little time to draw it.”

There was no one on the floor at the time, and the place seemed inviting. Harry took a seat and began figuring in his note-book, while Mr. Coon darted off to the side for his beer.

“Wash me out a dozen glasses,” he called to his assistant, and in an instant later there was a great clatter of tumblers

as Paul Jones proceeded to comply with his master's demands.

The beverage was drawn, and the proprietor himself walked out in front of the counter and presented it to his customer.

"Whew! how sharp it is!" exclaimed the drummer after he had swallowed it; "why, that is the sharpest beer I ever drank in my life."

"That is because it is so cold," answered the barkeeper; "let me set you a little lunch." Coon immediately placed before his visitor a tempting plate of thinly sliced Swiss cheese and delicately cut pieces of bread.

"You might bring me a small glass to wash this lunch down with," said the customer.

It was drawn as directed, and set by his plate. There were some flies lingering about in the lap of autumn that afternoon, and Harry was soon striking out after them in all directions. Coon tapped a bell, and Kate came forward for instructions. "Get your fan, and keep the flies off that gentleman."

Harry now began to grow loquacious. He soon was on his feet making speeches and selling coffee to imaginary customers, and his speeches soon became incoherent.

"Move those glasses, Kate, before he breaks them."

"Kate, Kate, did he say? Why, you know me Kate. Kate, Kate, Kentucky mustard! I know you, little girl! Come and go with me, your mama wants you at home." With this Mr. Benson lost his balance and fell back in his chair, while his head and arms dropped forward across the table, and he began to snore audibly and hard.

"That fellow must have been full when he came in here," remarked Mr. Coon.

"It looks that way," said Paul.

At the sight before her, Kate fled to her room, frantic with horror.

"We must get him out of here," said the proprietor, "before any one comes in. Come here and give me a hand," said he, addressing his assistant.

The two saloon men, now reinforced by Mrs. Coon, carried Benson to the "cooling-room," where they laid him out upon a cot, and undertook to make him, as they called it, comfortable.

"He will be all right in an hour or two, and you can go back to the bar," said he to Paul.

The assistant obeyed, and as soon as he had resumed his position behind the coun-

ter, he drew out a book from his pocket, snatched a blank leaf from it, and going to the spot where his employer had filled the glasses he quickly stooped down and brushed on to it a small quantity of white powder that had fallen from a package Coon had in his hand at the moment he filled Benson's order.

"Well, I have got you this time," said Paul, as he wrapped up his powder and placed it securely in an envelope, and stored it away in his pocket.

Fortunately for Coon, there had been no customers lounging around the saloon at the time Benson went under. The hour of the unfortunate occurrence was the one least devoted to either Bacchus or Gambrianus. The midday loafers had slunken off to sleep, and the evening gang had not as then crawled in. It was an auspicious hour for Mr. and Mrs. King Coon, and they took full advantage of its quietude in order to rob their over-drugged and now unconscious victim.

"My, though, how white he is!" said the lady.

"Mixed drinks," replied the gentleman, and they riddled his pockets and brushed off the cold clammy sweat that now stood on the brow of the drummer.

Twilight came on, and with it the usual crowd of those who found bar-rooms more conducive to happiness than their own domestic firesides. Said one of the habitués to his companions, "there's more peace and happiness here than at home." While another one smothered the thought that the family at home would be happy, at least for the night, if they had but a scant loaf of bread to ward off their hunger.

Benson slept in the "cooling-room," his loud and stertorous respirations growing more and more inaudible, until a pale stillness settled over his contracted features.

Mrs. Coon remarked, "we had better get him out of here before he dies on our hands."

Mr. Coon had been thinking this way himself for some time. For one to die in his bar-room meant a loss of his revenue, except in the individual instance of a murder when the opposite result was sure to follow. But this was no murder. A man comes into the saloon and dies after drinking a glass or two of King Coon's beer. There was no gunpowder in it; nothing attractive whatever about it, nothing to draw a remunerative crowd consequent upon it.

"We must get this fellow out of here and that pretty quick." And Coon went out in

the darkness and secured him a hackman to haul Harry Benson's remains to the hospital.

"And tell them out there," said the bar-keeper, "that the man was sick when he came here, and grew suddenly worse after his arrival."

Twilight came on and had passed, and the scene in the "cooling-room" became more and more gruesome. It looked as though Benson would die on their hands. There was no music in the hall that evening, and fortunately but few customers. Katy was upstairs in her room, reflecting over the harrowing scenes of the afternoon, and trembling over the possible outcome of her master's iniquity. Benson was packed out through the rear door of the building, across the back yard to the alley gate, where a carriage was in waiting.

Coon and the driver, aided by the zealous wife of the proprietor, packed the almost lifeless body of the drummer along, and dumped him in the bottom of the carriage.

"Now take up a back street," said Coon, "and tell them at the hospital how he came

While this scene was going on below, Kate Coleman—attracted by the shuffling feet—peered down from the floor above and caught a glimpse of the procession as it

was moving out. She clearly saw from her concealed position the cold, pale face of the victim they were carrying out.

“Great Heavens, they have murdered him!” she gasped. “I will fly. I will be implicated. To the gallows we will all go!” They were now in the back yard with the drummer, the coast for the moment was clear, and the excited girl rushed downstairs, and into the drinking-room, expecting to escape.

Paul Jones had taken the precaution to close the saloon doors as soon as the room was emptied of its visitors, in order to avoid calling attention to the proceedings; and now they were all securely fastened. Kate rushed into the saloon with her outstretched hands raised above her head, and her golden tresses streaming down her back. She tried the doors and found them locked, and in a fit of desperation she ran to Paul and exclaimed in an appealing whisper:

“If you have a spark of manhood in you, save me from this living hell!”

In an instant the situation flashed over the young man, and he hurriedly replied:

“Go quick to your room and remain there; I will rescue you before another night is over. I am your friend.”

Kate fled to her room, as directed by Paul, and she threw herself across her bed in an almost dazed condition. She had heard his words, "I will rescue you—I am your friend." She scarcely knew how to interpret them; they were so strange, so sudden; so unexpected. "I to be rescued? and so soon? He my friend, when I thought all the world was against me, can it be true? Has my prayer then been answered?" And she clasped her hands together and uttered a heartburst of thanks to her Maker. The terrible strain of anxiety had been lifted from her soul, and she fell to sleep as she lay, without even undressing.

CHAPTER X

IT WAS eight o'clock at night when the hack containing Benson, more dead than alive, drove slowly into the hospital yard, and the driver reported that he had brought up a very sick man to be cared for. Two of the students went out and confirmed the condition.

"I should smile," said Gross, "he is as sick a man as they make them. Why didn't you bring him up in a wagon?"

"Because there was none around at the time," said the driver, "and I just had to get him in and bring him along the best way I could."

"What's his name?" asked the student.

"That I don't know, sir."

"Where did you get him from?"

"Out on West Commerce street."

"Well, give us a hand and help us in with him."

Benson was carried in and laid on a clean bed in one of the wards of the hospital.

"Gee! this fellow's toney," remarked

Harris; "look at that watch-chain and pin."

"Go call Doc. or he will be dead before he can get here."

Pretty soon the house doctor put in an appearance. He was the apple of Doctor Ketchum's eye, and held his position in the hospital owing mainly to this fact. Doc. was a nice fellow, though, and had the credit of being wiser than he looked.

"Go quick as you can," said the doctor to Gross, "and put up this prescription; the man is almost dead, while I send a messenger out to hunt up Dr. Ketchum."

The preceptor had a routine, though heroic form of treatment for such cases, which he had impressed upon his pupils, and they immediately and zealously set about to carry out this practice in the case of Benson. They had likewise been taught that in the event of failing in the use of such remedies it was useless to look elsewhere for relief.

Gross ran to get the medicine, while Grant and Harris busied themselves in getting their patient undressed and ready for dosing.

The medicine was soon obtained, for it usually stood ready in the hospital drug

store for administration, and by heroic efforts Benson was made to swallow it.

"What's the matter with him, Doc., anyhow?" Gross asked.

"I don't know," Doc. answered; "but let's pack him around with hot water, for he feels mighty cold to me."

The three students all ran for the water, and soon had their insensible victim fairly blistered with bottles of hot water well packed up against him. The students had now about reached their wits' end, and were standing about, commenting on their patient's condition, and on his personal appearance, when Doctor Ketchum arrived.

"Why, what's this you have got here?"

"That's what we are waiting for you to tell us, Doc.," replied Harris.

"Why, it's a case of 'congestion,' of course," remarked Ketchum. "Where did he come from?"

The boys told all they knew, and added: "We have gone through his pockets, but he had nothing about him except some letters, and an identification card, and this watch and society badge."

"Did you give him our medicine?" inquired Dr. Ketchum.

"You bet your bottom dollar we did," said Harris, chewing gum.

“Well, if that don’t bring him around, nothing in the world will. But he seems pretty low, and his pulse is mighty weak; we will wait on the medicine a while and see what it does for him. Put his name on the register, and take care of his effects, for they will surely be called for.”

Dr. Ketchum slept at the hospital that night, and divided most of his time by occasional glances at Benson, and in dealing out wisdom to the students.

“Medicine is a noble science,” he informed them, “and there is always satisfaction in its results when you feel that you have done your best, even though your patients may sometimes die. The young man who selects medicine as a profession can never be wrong; and a good doctor can drop down anywhere and always make a living where other men would starve. It is, moreover, an exalted calling; people all respect you, and the confidence that some women place in their family physician is beyond the comprehension of man.”

“How’s that, Gross, for a starter?” asked Grant.

“It’s the brightest feature I see in medicine,” said Gross.

A watch was set by Benson for the night, with instructions what to do; and by mid-

night every one in the building, including the watchman, was buried in sleep.

While the students and Dr. Ketchum were working away on Mr. Benson, and endeavoring in their crude yet honest methods to call back his waning life, the little office of Walter Whitman, detective, was also the scene of unusual animation, as the occupants unfolded their plans for the next evening.

"From the very fact," said Whitman, "that the girl appealed to you for relief, is proof sufficient that she is held there against her will; undoubtedly she has been abducted, and this presupposes unlawful methods. You are positive that you saw the proprietor draw from his pocket a package of some kind and empty its contents into the glass which he offered to the visitor?"

"I would swear to it," answered Paul; "and furthermore, I have a sample of what he threw into the glass at the time."

Jones then drew from his pocket the envelope and handed the sample to Whitman. The detective carefully examined the tiny white powder that Paul gave him.

"Give it to me; I will know very soon what it is. And since the man you speak of succumbed shortly after he took it, and

was sent to the hospital later on, more dead than alive, I think we can now reasonably hold the proprietor responsible for its effects, as well as for some other transactions I have noted against him of late, an account of all of which I have filed away here in this office."

Walter Whitman walked up and down in his office for fully three minutes, and then turned to Paul with this statement:

"He has a gun in the drawer, has he not?"

"Yes," said Paul, "and he has every chamber of it loaded."

"Very well," said the detective. "He will go to his supper at seven. Now I want you to unload his gun for me when he goes out. I want you to take these dummies and substitute them for the cartridges he has in his pistol. He will need, and will probably use his gun, some time to-morrow evening; and if he does so, I would prefer being fired at by blanks instead of by bullets. Take this cylinder. You say his is a 48? Then take out his cylinder, slip this one in, and he may shoot until doomsday without hurting anybody."

"Now listen," said Whitman. "I am going to rescue that girl at any hazard, and I am going to do it effectively. There's

not going to be any time for injunctions about it. I want her evidence, and I am going to get it so quickly and so completely that neither Coon nor his accomplice wife will have any time to interpose an objection, except with his pistol.

“Now you understand what you are to do? You are to exchange these dummies I gave you for the cartridges in Coon’s pistol. I will be there to-morrow, between seven and eight o’clock, and with others, but you will not know me. I will call on you at the cigar end of the counter, and will ask you for the bundle I left there that day, and if everything is all right, you will hand me Coon’s cylinder, wrapped up in paper; and if things are not right, you have only to say, ‘I will have it here for you in the morning.’ There’s nothing simpler than this; and if you are successful you may expect your lights to go out soon after; at which time we will effect the object of my visit. Do you understand the program now thoroughly?”

“I do,” answered Paul.

It was twelve o’clock when this interview ended, and at the same hour Dr. Ketchum arose from his bed and went down to look at his patient.

"I'm afraid he's gone," said the doctor; "but watch him well, nurse, and if any great change either way should occur come at once and inform me."

On the following morning Harry Benson lay on his little white cot in the hospital, barely alive. His pulse now was scarcely perceptible at the wrist, and the entire medical staff of the institution stood silent around him.

"If I could get him to swallow," remarked Dr. Ketchum, "I would give him another round of medicine."

"The medicine might cure him," said Harris, "but its administration would certainly kill him."

"There's but one thing, gentlemen," said Dr. Ketchum, "that might bring him around, and that's brandy. We will give him about six ounces of brandy, and it will afford you all a good opportunity to see the application of the stomach tube. Bring me a bottle of spiritus vini gal., and the stomach tube."

The order was no sooner given than obeyed, and Dr. Ketchum, after an awkward effort to get the tube introduced, proceeded to pour six ounces of old French brandy through it.

"Now," said the Professor of Practice,

“if this does not bring him around, nothing else will.”

“Would you be keeping those hot bottles to him any longer?” inquired the nurse.

“No; you can take them away,” responded the Doctor.

The bottles, now full of cold water, were removed, but a dozen well-filled blebs and blisters on the patient’s body demonstrated the powerful force of the remedy.

“Now, boys, I must go,” said the preceptor, “and if he dies, as he will do, write out his certificate, and have him buried.”

The last remedy soon began to exercise its influence. Given in the enormous quantity in which it was administered, it added to, instead of counteracting, the deep sedation of the patient. His pulse soon after this became imperceptible, and his respirations so shallow that they could not be recognized by anyone around. Dr. Ketchum had scarcely left the building when a visitor called at the hospital, and asked if he could see the gentleman who was brought in the night before.

“He is dead,” said the house doctor.

“Oh! indeed! I am sorry,” said the visitor, “for I wanted to see him.”

“Well, come in,” said the young doctor. “We have not removed him yet.”

“Thanks.”

Walter Whitman went in and viewed the body for a few minutes.

“Did he have any effects on him when he came in?”

“No; none but some letters and his watch.”

“No money in any of his pockets?”

“None whatever.”

“Did you examine carefully for any?”

“We surely did, as soon as he got here.”

“And what name was he entered under?”

“Harry Benson, drummer, New York.”

“I am much obliged to you, gentlemen. By the way, what disease did he die of?”

“Congestion,” said the house doctor.

Whitman left, and twenty minutes later the coroner came with six men and viewed the body. Then the testimony of all the students was taken, and the inquest was adjourned until later in the day.

CHAPTER XI

IN SPITE of the terrible warning to "go slow," received by King Coon on the evening before, the doors of his saloon were thrown open, and the people came and went, and the drinks were passed around, as usual.

"They'll have a hard time proving that I killed him," muttered Coon to his wife. "Our oaths are just as good as theirs, and dead men tell no tales. I have been in worse scrapes than this, and lived through them; and now you all get down to business and make yourselves useful. Where's that girl?"

Katy was a little late in coming down that evening; a dull indifference had come over her; she had grown desperate and determined. He had done his worst, she thought. He had abused and threatened her repeatedly. If he dared go further she would run into the streets and cry for help. Katy came down shortly after eight; there were men about the place. She took no no-

tice of them, but seated herself at the piano and played some rapid bar-room music. O'Hoolyhan came to the door with his club, and looked in a minute, and then passed on. Paul Jones leaned back on the cigar case, and alternately drew glasses of beer or mixed cocktails, as they were respectively called for.

Two men, apparently sailors, came in and sought a table remote from the door, and asked for beer and the dominoes. Then shortly afterward two more, in the garb of plain, honest workmen, came in, and seated themselves near the front entrance. Kate was called to assist at the tables.

"Take this order to number three," said the barkeeper, and she did so.

The men looked at her momentarily and then proceeded to sip the contents of their glasses. She returned to the piano and resumed her playing, her golden hair clasped behind her snow-white shoulders with a silver comb. Old Pat poked his round, red face in again, and looked around, then passed along. It was nine o'clock by this time, and the crowd had thinned out. The thirsty had been quenched, and they sauntered off. Old Coon wore a deep and stolid air upon his face, and with his arms folded across his broad chest looked down upon

his customers with an air of brutal satisfaction.

Then two boys came in and called for drinks and dominoes, and the proprietor asked them to be seated while he waited on them. At this moment one of the two men seated near the door arose and went to the cigar stand. Paul was standing there, and he was asked, "Have you the bundle I left here to-day?"

The young man started back, stared an instant, recovered himself, and answered: "Yes; here it is," as he handed the inquirer a very small package.

Then the strange man aimlessly strolled about the room, looking first at one set of drinkers, then at another, and finally he sauntered over to where Kate was playing. He stood between her and the open door, and seemed to be reading her music as she played. She paid no attention to him whatever. It was a common occurrence for men to come about her and attempt to sing while she was playing, and she thought nothing of it. A quarrel arose between the men playing dominoes near the "cooling-room." High words ensued between them over the game, and the two arose for a scuffle, and while settling their dispute they overturned the table, the glasses, and the

dominoes. It made a great clatter, and King Coon ran to them to put them out of the saloon. As he did so every light in the room went out, and a scramble was heard, and a scream went up at the piano. Coon's suspicions were instantly aroused. In the vernacular of the day, he "caught on." There was a terrible scamper for the doors, and Coon darted for his revolver, and seizing it, fired rapidly three shots at the dark forms hurrying out of the door nearest the piano.

"They are robbing me!" he exclaimed. "Turn on the lights!" It required but a moment to turn on the meter and to strike matches, and for Paul and himself to light up again. As soon as the light was restored King Coon exclaimed: "This is hell! Do you know anything about it?"

Mrs. Coon rushed in, exclaiming:

"What's the matter? What's the matter?"

"Those scoundrels have robbed me, but I've got some of them, and I'll see the balance hung!"

He had scarcely finished the sentence when Patrick O'Hoolyhan stepped in, and going straight up to the proprietor, said:

"Coon, you are my prisoner!"

"The hell I am! I'd like to see you take

me!" As he said this he ran for his gun, and Mrs. Coon ran for a knife with which to assist him.

"The game's up, Coon. Surrender and go to jail!" said Paul Jones, emphatically, closing on the outraged barkeeper.

The saloon was full of people by this time, attracted by the noise.

"What have you got to do with it, you scoundrel?" shouted Coon.

"Here's my authority," said Jones, throwing back his coat and displaying a silver badge; "and if that's not sufficient, this is!" and he shoved a loaded six-shooter into his companion's face. "You are caught up with at last."

Coon made a show of resistance and fired his pistol, but the powerful grip of Paul and O'Hoolyhan was now set upon him like a vise, and in another instant they had the cuffs upon him. . . .

"Don't be afraid, little girl. We are friends here to rescue you," exclaimed Walter Whitman, in a low, gentle voice, as he hurried out of the bar-room with his trembling charge.

"Oh! thanks, sir, thanks!" replied the girl, too frightened at the suddenness of her seizure and the pistol shots to utter any lengthened sentence.

“Are you his daughter?”

“No; they stole me.”

Then Whitman called to the patrolman lingering near, and said: “Go and arrest them both; take them to the station, and I will file the charges.”

A carriage was standing at the end of the block, and before the lights had been turned on at The Crescent again, Whitman and Kate Coleman were speeding away toward the detective's office.

CHAPTER XII

FROM the steamer Ella Coleman had been driven to the Metropolitan, where she arranged for her stay, and then ordered the hackman to go straight to the orphanage. The town had changed in her absence; new buildings by the hundreds had been erected during the past seven years, and most of the old landmarks had been pulled away or else metamorphosed beyond her recognition. She arrived at the orphanage building, full of maternal anxiousness for her only child. "Is she there at all? Is she living or dead?" She scarcely waited for the invitation to enter, but rushed impetuously into the little parlor.

"My child!" she asked. "Is she here?"

"Your name, please."

"My daughter's name was Kate Coleman."

"Oh!" said the Sister, a novice at the place, "I will call the Mother."

"That argues ill," said Mrs. Coleman. "Were she here that novice would have told me so."

The Superior came in in a minute. The two women eyed each other for an instant, and then rushed together to each other's arms, for their delight was mutual.

"My daughter—Mother, is she living?"

"Yes, I hope so, madam."

Then the two sat close together while the Superior related all that she could recollect of Katy and her adopted parents.

"They brought excellent credentials," said the Superior, "and I let Katy go. We have often tried to trace the family, but never have been able to locate them. Mrs. King, residing near Bristol, was the address she furnished."

Fully half an hour was spent at the orphanage, when Mrs. Coleman departed and ordered her coachman to drive to the telegraph station. She wired the postmaster at Bristol: "Is there anyone residing in your county named King? Answer at my expense."

"I need hardly expect a reply before late, and probably none before morning," she thought. She then drove to the hotel, expecting to meet Mr. Benson; but Mr. Benson had not registered, nor could he be found about the place. She sat up until twelve o'clock that night, hoping that he might yet call at the parlor.

“This is strange,” she said, “yet business men are often delayed at their work. He intimated that he would meet me at the breakfast table in the morning; that shows he did not expect to turn in early to-night.”

While she was wondering over the unexpected absence of her new acquaintance, whom she looked upon by this time as her “friend in need,” other important transactions were taking place in different sections of the city, and, wearied with waiting and watching, the anxious mother retired to rest.

Mrs. Coleman arose next morning, refreshed after her slumber of the preceding night, and happy with pleasant anticipations for the coming day. My child lives, and I will be able to locate her, probably, before the sun goes down.”

She stayed longer than the usual time before her beveled mirror, putting on extra touches to a naturally beautiful face and figure.

“And yet why should I be so particular? I doubt if he cares a farthing for me, outside the feeling of a friend. It almost seems ridiculous in me primping for a man so many years my junior—yet not so much, either—only four and a half years; that’s easily compensated for. I really believe

I love him, though, in spite of his age. To say the least, he is charming and refined, and I have money enough to make us both comfortable for years to come. But no; this cannot be! He's an engaged man; he has told me all about his affianced; she is a beautiful and fortunate girl. I will waive any hope I may have nurtured. I will make the sacrifice, as hard as it may seem—I will not hope."

There is no telling how long these battling sentiments would have lasted, as the beautiful singer stood arranging her hair and coloring her cheeks, had not a strange voice, followed by a stranger face, interrupted her reverie.

"Mum, can I get in here to clean up your room?"

"Why," asked Mrs. Coleman, "is it so late as all that?"

"Sure, mum, it's nine o'clock, and breakfast's most over."

"Well, come in; I'll be out in a minute. By the way, while waiting don't you want to make a quarter of a dollar?"

"Is it honest, mum?" inquired the maid.

"Why, of course," was the reply. "I never deal in any other kind of bargains."

"Sure, mum. What is it?"

"Well, here; will you go to the office be-

low and inquire if this gentleman is in the house?" handing the servant a card.

"Mum, if I was caught off this floor before twelve o'clock I would be discharged. Push that thing in the wall there by you, and ye can get anything ye wants in the house. Is he your husband?" inquired the maid.

"Only a friend I expected to meet here at breakfast."

"And sure, there won't be any breakfast for you at all if ye don't get there in five minutes."

Mrs. Coleman clasped the lids of her jewelry casket together, and placing her treasures in her trunk, hurried down stairs and into the dining-room, under the impression that Mr. Benson had grown weary of waiting and had preceded her to the table and gone off to his work. She was not, therefore, surprised to find him absent from the room, and seating herself at a table she hurriedly dispatched a light breakfast.

After she had finished her meal Mrs. Coleman went to the office of the hotel and inquired if Mr. Benson was about the building, and the clerk informed her that the gentleman had not as yet registered. "Although," said he, "his trunk came up yes-

terday afternoon and has been laying here uncalled for ever since."

The lady was a little surprised, but the clerk informed her that such occurrences frequently took place, especially in the case of traveling men, who often failed to follow their baggage upon its delivery for a day or two. "When he comes I will inform him of your inquiry, and let you know of his arrival."

While she was thus engaged with the hotel clerk a Western Union messenger boy came in and handed her the following telegram:

"No person named King has resided in this county for twenty years.

"ALB. JOHNSON, P. M."

Mrs. Coleman started at the announcement. She had expected different intelligence. A world of conjectures flashed through her mind. "Here is a deception at the outset. No person named King ever lived in the county. Yet those who carried off my child gave Bristol as their residence."

From conjectures suspicions arose, and out of suspicions sprang determination. She ran upstairs and adjusted her hat; then ordered a carriage.

"Take me to the orphanage," she di-

rected, and the hackman drove immediately to that institution. The Superior was called out again, and Mrs. Coleman communicated her information from the postmaster at Bristol.

An air of concern now gathered about the faces of the ladies.

"There would appear to be something wrong about the Kings. Evidently a false domicile has been given me," said the nun. "And this now accounts for the numerous letters returned to me from that post office, uncalled for. Since a deception has been detected I would advise that we go together to the Bishop and ask him about these people, since he so warmly recommended them."

"Your suggestion," said Mrs. Coleman, "is a good one; and as I have my carriage here we will use it for that purpose. You know him well, Mother, do you not?"

"Yes, although we do not meet oftener than once a year."

After a few minutes of preparation the two ladies drove to the Bishop's residence and called for him.

"He is not in at present," answered the housekeeper. "He is away in the country, but we expect him back here at eight o'clock this evening."

"Are you sure he will be back at that hour?" she was asked.

"Oh, yes, ma'am he only left this morning, and he has business to transact here as soon as he returns."

This was a long time to wait for the intelligence sought. Both women now were painfully interested in the Bishop's expected information.

"How can I kill time until eight o'clock?" asked Mrs. Coleman.

"Come and stay with me, dear, until then," answered the Superior, "and we will try and brighten the hours for you until he comes."

"Mother, you stated that the mayor also furnished a testimonial for Mrs. King, did you not?"

"Yes," was the reply "and his recommendation influenced me very much in the disposition of your daughter."

"Let us then go to his office and see him," requested Mrs. Coleman.

The couple then hurried away to his honor, and found him engaged, but they soon obtained an audience with that dignitary, and the ladies communicated the object of their mission. The mayor looked a little surprised when the question of his recommendation was sprung upon him.

“Really,” said he, “I have no recollection of ever having given such a testimonial. I know a family or two by that name living here in the city, but none of them ever called on me for such a purpose. It is barely possible that I may have given such, but I do believe, and I am almost certain, that I never gave any such recommendation as you refer to. It is barely possible, moreover, that someone has duped the orphanage in order to get a girl to work for them.”

This information and conjecture wrought Mrs. Coleman up to a high degree of excitement. There arose in her imagination a strong suspicion of fraud, and she coupled it with forebodings of a most horrible nature.

“My child! my child! Where are you, and how living?”

“Ladies,” said the mayor, “let us hope for the best. There are families by the name of King in this city, and I will send to each place for you and ascertain, if possible, if your missing child may not be with some of them. Now suppose you two return to your homes until I make this investigation, when I will report to you.”

It was four o'clock in the afternoon when Mrs. Coleman received a note from the

mayor saying he had sent to every person in the city answering to the name of King, and so far none of them knew of the girl in question.

"I would suggest," added the mayor, "that if you do not hear something definite through the Bishop when he returns to-night, you had better place your case in the hands of Mr. Walter Whitman, detective, who, no doubt, could assist you."

"Walter Whitman! Why, I know him! He was a friend of my late husband, and was prominent in the trial of the man who took his life. Walter Whitman is a friend, and I will go and lay my case before him."

Mrs. Coleman had risen to go to the detective's office when someone rapped at the door. She hastened to see who it was.

"The clerk sent this paper up to you, and said read this here notice." The bell-boy pointed to a paragraph encircled by a pencil line in blue, and pulled the door after him as he went out.

"Harry Benson, a commercial traveler from New York, was taken suddenly ill with congestion, on West Commerce street, last night, and was taken to the City Hospital for treatment. Since his removal to the hospital *The Echo* learns that Mr. Benson died."

Had a thunderbolt struck Mrs. Coleman she could not have been more surprised, more horrified, more paralyzed. She tottered to her bed, and threw herself across it, nearly fainting.

“What! Can it be! Is it possible! Where am I, anyhow? Harry Benson dead—and so soon! I saw him but yesterday—youthful, handsome, and happy. He promised to meet me here at this hotel to-day, and now he is dead! This explains his absence. What does it mean? How did it happen? At the City Hospital! This accounts for his non-appearance. Oh! I have judged him wrongly! Poor girl! It will break her heart! I will follow him. I will seek those who saw him. I will go to the hospital and learn it all.”

“Drive me quickly to the hospital!” she said to a hackman on the outside.

The carriage door was slammed on her, and the coachman cracked his whip, and the now wrought-up woman was hurried away to the hospital.

“Boys,” said Harris, “there comes a stunning widow.”

“How do you know it’s a widow?” inquired Gross, rushing to the window.

“By the way she’s dressed. Can’t you

tell 'em across the street, by this time?" responded Harris.

"I wish to see the physician in charge of this hospital," said Mrs. Coleman.

"Madam," said Harris, "the physician in charge is away at the present moment, but maybe I could answer in his place."

"I see by the evening paper," said the lady, "that a Mr. Benson was brought here last evening, and died here from the effects of congestion."

"It is true, madam," said Harris. "He died, but we did all that science could suggest to save him."

"May I see his remains?" asked Mrs. Coleman.

"You might, with pleasure," said Harris, "but the fact is the remains of the gentleman have been buried."

"What! So soon!" she exclaimed.

"Six hours dead," said Harris, "we generally send them out after that."

"Where was he buried?" she inquired.

"In the city cemetery, I expect," she was told.

"Did he leave any effects behind him?" she inquired.

"Nothing but some letters and his watch."

"Are you related to him?" asked Harris.

"No; only a friend," was the reply.

"Well, madam," responded Harris, "his remains were just sent out to the cemetery, and he is buried by this time. How would you like to go out and see his grave?"

"I will do so at once," said the widow.

"If you have no objections, I will go out with you and show you the place," said Harris.

"I thank you, sir. You are a stranger to me," said Mrs. Coleman. "I will go there alone."

The cemetery was fully two miles from the hospital, and it was now nearly five, nearly sundown. Hurriedly she drove to the silent city of the dead, and was fortunate in catching the old sexton just as he was leaving the grounds.

"You have just buried a young man from the hospital!" she exclaimed. "Have you not?"

"I have, ma'am just got through with him."

"Would you be kind enough to let me see his grave?" she asked.

"Just this way, then, ma'am. Here it is."

There was a new made and unmarked

mound. Old Clayton pointed it out and remarked:

“There is the grave, ma’am, you are looking for.”

Mrs. Coleman stood a full minute in melancholy contemplation near the grave.

“Poor boy!” she murmured. “Not a soul near you to say good-bye. No one to follow you here but a stranger! Sweet memory, farewell! Sad hearts bowed down at this loss be comforted! How strange, how inscrutable the laws of nature—the ways of Providence!”

“Did you know him?” asked the sexton.

“Yes,” replied the widow, as she stood, pale and tearful. “Will you mark his grave?” she asked.

“Oh, yes. I number them all.”

“Well, here’s ten dollars. Put a slab, engraved ‘H. B.’ upon it, near his head. Some day his remains may be called for, and his grave then can be identified.”

She dropped a sprig of cedar on Harry’s grave and turned away. Then she went to another section of the cemetery and stood by a grass-covered mound. “That’s Frank Coleman’s grave,” said the sexton.

“Yes, I know it,” she replied. “Will you put it in order?”

"I will, ma'am. It will cost you three dollars, but it will be well done."

"She handed him a five-dollar bill. "Put it in good order. And now it is late—I must go."

"Yes," said the sexton, "we don't often have ladies here at this hour."

Mrs. Coleman rode back to the hotel.

"I will go there and rest until eight. I will also wire his affianced at Charleston. She might come. I would pay her expenses to have her here." And she sent a dispatch through to Nellie, and gave her the news in a nutshell.

Nellie's heart was crushed at the news, and she went to her room and remained there for the balance of the evening, prostrated with sorrow. Next morning Mrs. Bly sought out Mr. Cheek, the insurance agent, and told him of Mr. Benson's death.

"I will wire for the proof," Cheek replied, "for my company prides itself on its promptness in paying its claims." And he said to himself: "She's a beautiful girl, the one he left as his beneficiary, and now he is gone I will lay siege to her heart myself and now is the right time to do so."

Cheek kept the wires to Baden warm that morning, and by noon he had all the proof

he needed to substantiate Harry Benson's death. It cost over five dollars to get all the proper acknowledgments. Then he went to the Bly residence and said: "Mr. Benson has not been dead a day yet, and I am here now to pay you his insurance."

"Why, Mr. Cheek, would you talk to me upon such a mercenary subject so soon?"

"Well, Miss Bly, it's a pride with us to settle these matters as soon as we can. There's a one thousand dollar check at your command, as soon as you sign a receipt for it."

"No, Mr. Cheek, I could never be so heartless as to take a dollar under such circumstances. It shall never be said that Nellie Bly dressed and lived on the insurance of her dead lover. I will have nothing whatever to do with it."

"Miss Bly, you are blind to your own interests, and actually throwing away one thousand dollars by your false sentiment. If you won't have the claim, and do not wish to be connected in any way whatever with it, then sign this paper and turn the policy over to me, and I will give you my personal check for five hundred dollars."

"Turn it over to my mother," said Nellie, "for I will have no money obtained in such a manner."

Cheek gave Mrs. Bly his personal check for \$500, for, and in consideration of the surrendering of the policy, and went off, feeling that he had made a profit of nearly that much in the transaction. And Mrs. Bly immediately went down to the bank and collected the check, and gave all of the money to Nellie.

“Now,” said Cheek, “I have executed a masterpiece of business and social diplomacy, and am five hundred dollars ahead.”

CHAPTER XIII

SUPPER hour came on at the Metropolitan, but Mrs. Coleman had not the slightest inclination for her meal. "I will stay where I am until eight, and then I will call on the Bishop. Well, what a day I have had, what a world of emotions have rushed through my soul since this time yesterday? What a change has transpired, and where will it end? What will I next hear?"

Another rap at the door, and she opened it.

"Mum, I called to leave you some towels." And the chambermaid filled up the rack, and turning to the lady, inquired: "Did he come yet, mum, the gentleman you were looking for this morning?"

"No, my good woman. The gentleman I was looking for died in the hospital this morning."

"Holy murder!" exclaimed the chambermaid. "How did he do it?"

"That is all I can tell you, my good woman. He landed here, well, from the steamer yesterday, and I last saw him at

the landing about four o'clock. He promised to be here for breakfast, and now he is buried."

"Sure, he must be the one Pat was telling me of, when he came in this morning."

"Who is Pat?" inquired Mrs. Coleman.

"Why, I thought everybody knowed Patrick O'Hoolyhan. He is the night policeman on West Commerce street, and the best on the force."

"What did he tell you?"

"Why, he told me how they took a man from old Coon's to the hospital, more dead than alive for his liquor."

Mrs. Coleman started. "That horrible name! Can it be? No! impossible!" she said to herself. "Mrs. Hoolyhan, it could not have been my friend, he was a gentleman, and never frequented such places."

"Sure, mum, they all be gentlemen that's been hauled out from that place o' late. My Pat passes there every night, and sees them go in and out; and the lady, too, mum, what waits on the bar, and tells me about it next day. And he told me at dinner how they did have him by the detective all day telling them what he knew; and he said to me, 'Margaret, there's going to be fun at old Coon's to-night, but don't breathe it to anybody, or I'll lose me place on the force.' I

might tell you more, mum, and about the lady, if I had the time," said Margaret O'Hoolyhan, as she stood before the prima donna, laden down with towels for the rooms on her floor, "for I knows a great deal; but I haven't the time."

Could the interview just related have taken place twenty hours sooner it is probable that the strangest and weirdest scene that ever occurred in Baden might have been averted.

Mrs. Coleman threw her head upon a pillow and lay in a fever of excitement and anxiety. "This waiting is terrible; this uncertainty unbearable! The world tonight, again, seems blue. Yesterday my heart was buoyant; now it is depressed. That woman's strange talk has impressed me. Yet she seemed to be honest, and to have authority for her statements. The clock is striking eight, and I will dress and go to the Bishop's. It's only a few blocks away. I will hear something definite. It can be no worse. It may possibly be something better."

She adjusted her hat, snugly pinned her blue cape about her throat, and drove to the Bishop's residence. To her ring at the door a servant came and admitted her into the parlor.

“He will be here presently; come in. But the train is late, and you just make yourself at home while you’re here.”

“How late?” Mrs. Coleman asked.

“Oh, half an hour, I believe.” Then she added: “There’s a crowd of gentlemen been already waiting for him in the hall. He’ll surely be here, madam.”

While Mrs. Coleman sat in the little parlor at the Bishop’s residence, awaiting the return of his belated Lordship, other scenes in other portions of the city of Baden, which have an important bearing on this narrative, were about to be enacted.

Mrs. Coleman waited wearily in the parlor at the Bishop’s residence. She thought he never would arrive. Nine o’clock came, and he had not appeared, and a crowd had assembled to meet him on business as soon as he came.

“This waiting is wretched; this uncertainty terrible! My heart sinks deeper and deeper with each wasted minute.”

But he came in at last, and went to his supper; then he went to the hall, by appointment, to confer with his gentlemen visitors. It was ten by the time he had finished and called on the lady.

“Benedicite te!” he exclaimed, as he entered the parlor, and remarked, “My dear child, how can I serve you?”

Mrs. Coleman told who she was, how she had placed her daughter at the orphanage seven years before; how a woman named King had called there two years before, and with his high recommendation had taken off her child, since which time no trace of either Mrs. King or the child could ever be had.

The Bishop stretched his eyes at this information.

“King—King,” he repeated. “I do not know such a person. I never recommended such a party. It’s a base forgery. It’s a robbery. Some person has stolen your child, under a forged recommendation, and I fear for the consequences.”

The mother collapsed at this intelligence. It was the last lingering ray of hope that had sustained her. The Bishop’s statement but confirmed her saddest fears.

“Abducted! Stolen for a life of shame! My only child! My darling daughter, is it for this I labored as a menial in order to restore you to a life of comfort and happiness? Oh, wretched existence! oh, blighted life! What hope is there for me?” and

she sank back on the sofa and wept like a child.

“Be comforted, daughter,” said the Bishop, in his softest tones. “Providence is kind to the afflicted; take this little medal and wear it near your heart, and trust in God.”

She took it mechanically, as a dernier resort, and pinned it to her bosom, then heaved a sigh.

“Thanks, my dear sir. I have but one recourse left now, and that is to place my child’s case in the hands of a detective, as advised by the mayor. It is late, but I cannot go to rest this night until I have started on this investigation; and even then I could not sleep with such a pall as this hanging over my heart. Thanks again, dear Bishop. I feel better. I will seek a detective. I will lay my case before him and invoke his assistance. I will trust in God.”

CHAPTER XIV

THAT evening Benson's body was carried to the city cemetery. It went out in the little hospital spring wagon, a vehicle held about the institution for sundry purposes. Sometimes it brought up from the city the week's supply of food and medicines, and sometimes it bore away the municipal consignments to the cemetery. In every instance, John, the negro roustabout around the institution, drove the wagon, and he usually traveled in a trot and with a whistle. Benson had gone out some hours before, and the students sat in the hospital office, as was their wont in the evening, discussing whatever chanced to come first into their minds.

"See here, boys," said Harris, "wouldn't that fellow make a splendid subject for dissection? By George, I would like to see his brain."

"And I would give a dollar to see what his liver looks like," remarked Gross.

"Well, why can't we have a little dissection to-night here among us? Doc will tell

us what's what. We've only had one showing here this winter; at this rate we'll never know anything at all about anatomy."

"You're right there," said Gross. "Suppose we hitch up old Dun and go out and get him?"

"Good," said Harris. "I'll go with you, and we'll leave Grant here to fix up the dissecting house for us."

The determination having been reached to resurrect Benson for the purpose of studying his anatomy in a leisurely and scientific manner, the negro was ordered to hitch up, and prepare himself for a night's trip to the cemetery. John well knew what this meant, and in fifteen minutes he drove around to the front gate, with a couple of shovels and a corn sack, and other essentials, ready.

"John," inquired Harris, "are you ready?"

"Yes, sir; I've got everything there that you need," replied the negro.

"Well, take us to that fellow you carried out this evening."

"Say! We will have to go by and put old Clayton on to it, won't we?" said Gross.

"Sure," answered Harris. "He's in with us, but we'll have to pay him three dollars for his trouble."

“That’s all right,” replied Gross; “I’ve got the money for him.”

The spring wagon was driven up to the sexton’s residence, and that worthy tradesman was called out and the bargain made.

“Hold on, boys,” he said, “until I get my hat, and we’ll all go out together.”

It was now about nine in the evening, and very few people were passing. The men huddled together as best they could in the wagon, and drove along, conversing in a low tone of voice.

“I buried him shallow,” said the sexton, “thinking maybe you fellows would like to have him again, and I think I was right, wasn’t I?”

“You’re always right, Clayton,” said Harris.

“Well, I like to stand in with you young doctors,” said Clayton, “because I look to you for the source of my revenue in the future. We are sort of partners, you know, and I believe in holding up my end of the business.”

“We sure think lots of you, Clayton,” remarked Gross.

“That’s no joke,” said Harris.

“Well, boys, I think lots of you all, and whenever you want any little work like this

done, just call on Mike Clayton, and he will always help you."

"Say, boys, we've got a bottle here somewhere!" exclaimed Gross. "Let's pass it around."

"Good!" said Clayton. "I second the motion."

"John, where's the bottle?"

"Here it is," said the driver, passing it back half empty.

"Help yourself, Mr. Clayton."

"Age before beauty," responded the sexton. "And here's to the medical students; may they live long and multiply."

By this time the party had arrived at the cemetery grounds.

"Drive right in," directed the sexton. "We are all at home here."

"Suppose we are detected?" suggested Gross.

"You'll go to the pen; that's all," said Harris.

"Gads, that would be terrible!"

"Yes, but you could get out again. Old Ketchum would get you out."

"You leave that all to me," interrupted Mr. Clayton. "If they detect us, we'll tell them we are moving a body for shipment. I'd like to see them disprove it. I've told them that before."

They now reached Benson's grave, and hitching the horse, each one stood around, prepared for the task assigned to him. Old Clayton nearly emptied the bottle, and began vigorously shoveling dirt.

The sexton and the negro took the shovels and had commenced to move the dirt from Benson's grave. Both of them were well under the influence of liquor, and each entered on his task with a zeal that seemed commendable. Old Clayton stopped to blow.

"Boys," he said, in a low tone of voice, "there came a pretty little widder out here this evening, and looked at this grave."

"You bet she was," said Harris. "I sent her out here. By George! I wish she was a little younger," added the student.

"What would you do if she was?" inquired the sexton.

"Why, I would set my cap for her," replied Harris.

"Hadn't you better get something under that cap before you go setting it for widders?" said the sexton.

"If I could get a rich and pretty one I wouldn't need to put very much under it."

"Well, you are about right," said old Clayton, with a chuckle. "She is Frank Coleman's widder; her husband was shot

here, some years ago, by old Coon. The old scoundrel! They ought to have hung him for it!"

"Well, see here," ventured Gross, "suppose they should send here for these remains, what would you do about it?"

"Why," replied the sexton, "I would send them somebody else's."

"How would that work?" inquired Gross.

"Why, I've done it before, and it worked all right," said the sexton.

"I'll bet a dollar that widow was in love with this fellow, and she's going to have his remains removed," said Harris.

"I'll bet you two to one she will not," replied the sexton, sharply. "She's got one lover laying over on the other side of the yard now, and she would never put the two of them together."

The spading was resumed in silence. The night was dark, yet the stars above gave light enough to work by. The low, shrill twitter of the nighthawk as it darted through the foliage of the cemetery added to the solemnity and weirdness of the scene.

"Don't make any noise with the box, boys," requested the sexton.

"Those mounted police are around here

sometimes, and if we are caught we'll all go to the pen."

"Say, boys," remarked Gross, sadly, "I'm sick already, and I will have to leave you."

"If you do," said old Clayton, firmly, "you will never live to get to the gate alive. The devil would have you before you got half way. Stay here and stick it out like a man."

About this time the shovel had struck the wooden box below, and the grating sound produced made Gross' blood run cold.

"Now here," said the sexton to John, "pass this rope under your end, and I will fix mine. Are you ready?"

"All right at this end," said John.

"Will you lads give us a hand? You sick man, you go there and help the nigger; he's at the lightest end. Now, all haul together."

Slowly the heavy box and its contents yielded to the force applied, and was drawn to the surface.

"Right out here in the grass, boys."

And in an instant the box and Benson were safely landed on the grass above the ground.

"Now, prize up your end of the lid," said the sexton, addressing the colored man,

John; and in less than a minute the lid was removed from the box and the coffin containing Harry Benson was laying there exposed.

“Yank it out!” said the sexton, and the coffin containing the mortal remains of the coffee drummer from New York was landed on the cold and dew-laden weeds of the cemetery.

“Now take off the lid!” ordered the sexton. John was an adept in this specialty, having served three seasons about the hospital in the business, and he drew out from somewhere a chisel and began to unscrew the lid of the coffin. Silently the work was performed; solemnly the stars twinkled down from above on the outlawed proceedings going on in the graveyard of Baden. And the nighthawk twittered as he shot through the foliage pursuing his prey.

“What are you afraid of?” said Clayton to Gross. “You’ve got to be here some day yourself. Now off with the lid, and to hell with the owner. Come, all together!” Off went the lid as directed, and there lay the cold, quiet, ashy remains of the drummer. Not a change had occurred. The same cold, pale and silent features that went out from the hospital.

“A magnificent subject,” said Harris.

"I'd rather be at home playing euchre—to-night—than to be here," thought Gross. "It is horrible!"

"Now, where is your sack?" asked the sexton. "Bring it here, and we'll just dump him head foremost into it, and you can tie it around his feet. Come, now!" said the sexton, "all together!"

As Benson was drawn from his snug and comfortable resting place in the coffin, the cool air of the cemetery, the pure oxygen of heaven suddenly rushed against his cheeks and into his nostrils, and acted like a mild galvanic current on him. Then he breathed an instant, and his consciousness returned. They were about to dump him into the corn sack. The air and the handling revived him. He recognized in an instant that something was wrong, and with a spring, as though from a horrible nightmare, he burst from their hands, and staggering, ejaculated:

"What's this? Where am I? Who are you?"

The gang fell back in horror; the negro fled. Gross fainted, falling with a heavy thud upon the graveyard grass. Old Clayton seized a nearby spade and made an aimless though terrific pass at Benson, and would have felled him to the ground but

for his staggering out of reach. Harris alone stood calm, firm, and resolute.

“We’re friends,” said he.

“Where am I?” inquired Benson, feebly.

“In the cemetery,” replied Harris and the sexton, conjointly and excited.

“What does it mean? How came I here?”

“Be calm,” said Harris. “We are friends.”

“You are robbers!” exclaimed Benson.

“You have brought me here and robbed me! Give me my watch, or I’ll kill both of you!”

“It’s a mistake,” said the sexton.

“Explain instantly, or by the Great Horn Block! I’ll kill you both instantly! What’s this? Where am I? How came I here? What are you doing to me? I see it all! You rascals have brought me here to rob me, then bury me; but I’ve waked up on you! Now I’ll take one of you at a time, or both of you, if necessary, and whip you! Throw up your hands, you infernal scoundrels!” said he, grabbing a spade.

“We surrender!” said Harris, now sympathizing with the deluded drummer. Benson stood upon the cemetery grounds, hatless and shoeless, pale and sepulchral looking, and with uplifted shovel, shouted in a feeble voice:

"Give back my watch! Give me my money!"

"See here, my friend," said Harris, "we are not robbers; we are your friends."

"You are dead!" said the sexton.

"The hell you say!" exclaimed Benson. "Who told you so? Dead, the devil! Explain yourselves! Who are you? Where am I? What am I doing here? What are you fellows trying to do with me?"

"You have been very sick," said Harris, speaking rapidly, "and you have been wandering about this cemetery, and we came here to take you back to your room."

"Is this Baden?"

"Yes."

"Where are my shoes?"

"You escaped without them. You ran off without your hat."

"It's no such thing. I've been asleep for an hour!"

"You've been sick for a day or two," said Harris, "and were out of your mind, and wandered out here, and we came here to get you."

"That's a singular tale you are telling me. What's that open grave for? I came to Baden this evening, and went to sleep in The Crescent saloon."

"And he drugged you!" exclaimed old

Clayton, "as he has done many a fellow before!"

"What! Have I been drugged? Now I see through it. Drugged and robbed, and——"

"Turned adrift in the cemetery!" exclaimed Harris.

"Boys, are you honest?"

"Yes; we swear to it!"

"Then take me home; show me to a hotel. No, take me to an officer of the law; take me to a good detective! I am dazed, boys, a little—take me out of this! I'm dry as Hades! Who's got anything to drink?"

Clayton gave him the few swallows he had left in the bottle, and Benson revived.

"Now I feel better. You fellows get me out of here, and take me to a policeman—no! to a good detective—something's wrong—I am robbed. I remember going into The Crescent this evening. I had on my watch. I am now out here in this graveyard, and my watch and money are missing and gone! Take me to a detective, and do it at once!"

Harris and the sexton stood thunder-struck. They took in the situation quickly.

"They have been too soon at the hospital with the corpse. They have made a mistake—they've made a horrible blunder!" thought Clayton.

"Come!" said Harris and the sexton. "We will steer you out of this. We will take you to a detective who will treat you fair and get you back your money."

And they steadied him as he walked, for he was still weak, over the grass and the graves in the yard, to the wagon standing near.

"Oh, my!" said the drummer, "my legs and my arms are so sore. By the Great Horn Block! I believe I've been beat up! Who have you fellows killed out there on the ground? I feel better." And they helped him to get into the wagon.

"What are you going to do with that sick one on the ground?" asked the sexton.

"Let me see," said Harris, and he returned and carefully examined Gross, laying there in a faint. "He's all right," said the dare-devil student. "We'll leave him here."

"No," said old Clayton. "That would be cruel."

"You leave him there!" said Harris. "He's studying to be a doctor, and if we carry him off now it would ruin him. Leave him where he is, and let him get home the best way he can."

"But the grave!" said the sexton. "We

must cover it up, or the town will be on to us in the morning!"

"Come here early in the morning," said Harris, "and cover your grave up; but let us get away from this place as soon as we can."

A minute later the wagon drove off with the three, Harris driving, while Gross lay in a dead faint in the cemetery, by the open grave and the coffin, with the nighthawks flying around him.

"Now," said Harris, "to Walt Whitman's we will drive with the dead man."

It was a mile to the detective's office, and they moved slowly. The cool air was reviving Benson; he was sore from his blisters, but soon grew familiar with his comrades. As yet he had not realized that he had been buried. He thought he had been drugged, robbed, and spirited away to the cemetery. All parties were dazed, except Harris.

CHAPTER XV

WALTER WHITMAN sat in his little office, the personification of manliness and grace, with his cold black eyes riveted on the trembling maiden seated in front of him. He had exchanged the rough disguise he wore a few minutes before, and now appeared arrayed in his usual black cloth suit, with his diamond button flashing from his snowy shirt.

“And you are the daughter of Ella Coleman?”

“Yes,” she replied.

“You the child of the only woman on earth I ever loved! Incredible it seems! And to think that, all these years, you have been living in this city, unknown to me! I thought you went to Europe with your mother, and had I only had the slightest inkling of your being here, you would have long ago been better situated, and far happier. How in the world, child, did you drift into the hands of those degraded people?”

“They took me away from the orphan-

age, sir," replied Kate, "upon the written recommendations of the mayor and the Bishop of Baden."

"Then they forged those papers on you, for no respectable person here would ever have given such people any testimonial of character whatever. They presented forged papers to you; and the penalty for such a crime, in this State, anyhow, is a ten years' life in the penitentiary. Could I but prove that miserable act upon them I could easily secure their convictions."

"I saw and read the testimonials myself," said Kate, now partially recovering from her fright, "and I could swear to both of them, if called on; so could the Superior of the orphanage, if she is living."

"Then they have abducted you!" exclaimed Walter Whitman. "A penitentiary offense in itself. And besides this, they did so under a couple of forgeries. Did they know who you were?" he inquired.

"She did," answered Kate, "for she asked me my name at the start; but he was under the impression all the time that my name was Kate Goldman. I heard his wife tell him this was my name, but I never knew why."

"The base hypocrite!" replied Whitman, his black eyes flashing rays of fire. "Well,

you are released," said he, "and you ought to be happy."

"Oh, I am, sir! I am so happy I do not know how to thank you! But where will I go now? Who will employ me?"

"Don't you fret over that. I will provide for you. Know, child, again, that your mother was the only woman I ever loved, and since her death I have never seen a happy day. You are her living image! I will, for her sweet memory, provide for you. I will place you in the convent here until you become of age and can manage for yourself."

"Oh, sir, would that be right?"

"My child, your artless question proves the innocence of your soul. Yes, with those good people caring for you, it would be right; and know you, before proceeding further, there are ample revenues belonging to you here to make you independent. When your father died he owned many tracts of land in this State. They were small, however, and at that period practically valueless. But time has made them valuable, and on one tract alone a town site is located. These tracts can now be sold and much money can be realized from them; and as far as worldly goods are concerned you may consider yourself a wealthy

girl. All that is lacking now to make your life supremely happy is the companionship and guardianship of your devoted mother. She may be living; no proof of her death has ever been seen by any of us here; and it is all surmise as to her death. For myself, I am skeptical on such subjects, and believe in nothing until it has been proven. Let us take heart, Kate. I will investigate your mother's whereabouts, for your sake, and we may yet discover her, alive, somewhere in Europe."

"Oh, sir, you are so kind. I do not know how to thank you. But for you I would have perished where I was. You are my savior! May I kiss your hand, to thank you?"

"My dear child, your gratitude touches my heart. I am only too happy to have rescued you from the wretched place you were living in."

Just then a loud rap was heard at Whitman's door.

"Kate, here is a reception-room for ladies. I must request that you be seated in there for a few minutes, and later I will see you safely cared for for the night."

Again the rap was repeated, and louder this time, and Walter Whitman hastened to open the door. The hatless apparition

that stood there made the detective stagger. He recovered himself in a moment, however, and exclaimed:

“Why, how in the world did you get here?”

“Are you a detective?” the apparition on the outside asked.

“My name is Whitman, sir, and such is my employment.”

“Well, I need one,” was the reply, “and that quickly!”

“Come in. Are you not Mr. Benson, the drummer?”

“I was yesterday,” was the answer, “but I do not know who I am to-night. They say I’ve been out of my head, and have been wandering about in the cemetery. I know one thing—I have been robbed of all my money, and I want you to overtake the rascal that did it.”

“Have a seat, Mr. Benson,” Whitman replied. “I think I can help you. How much have you lost?”

“One hundred and fifty dollars in bills, besides several dollars in silver,” he replied.

“Where do you think you lost it?”

“At The Crescent saloon, sure!”

“When?”

“This very evening.”

“Could you swear to what you say?”

“I will swear that I went into that saloon, called for a glass of beer, and as I drank it I thought I would be strangled, it was so hot. Then a young girl, who looked so innocent, came and sat by me, and fanned me, and then I fell asleep, and just now woke up in the cemetery, with two or three men holding me. I would have clubbed them, but they satisfied me of their honesty and friendship. They had a man laid out there dead and ready to be buried, and they left him there in order to show me the way here.”

“Yours is a remarkable adventure, Mr. Benson, and but for knowing something of your case beforehand, I might possibly doubt your statement. Who brought you here?”

“A young doctor from the hospital, named Harris, and the sexton of the cemetery,” said Benson.

“How came they to find you in the cemetery?”

“Well, that’s all a mystery to me. They must have gone there to resurrect some fellow, and found me there. At least, that’s the tale they put up to me.”

“Mr. Benson,” said the detective, slowly, and with his piercing black eyes bent

full upon his visitor, "the man they went to the cemetery to resurrect was yourself. You have been considered dead!"

"The hell I have!" shouted Benson. That thing's got to be a chestnut, and I don't want to hear anything more about it! I never have been dead!"

"It may be a chestnut, Mr. Benson, but a coroner's jury sat on your remains this very day, and they said you were dead."

"Then indict the last damned one of them for perjury! It's a libel, and it will break me up in business!"

"Mr. Benson," continued the detective, "you have had a terrible experience, and a fortunate escape from a fate more horrible than death."

"I should think I had, if I was dead."

"Listen to me! You went to The Crescent saloon on West Commerce street, not this afternoon, as you suppose, but at four o'clock in the afternoon of yesterday. The proprietor drugged you by adding to the beer you drank an enormous dose of chloral. Four hours after this you were taken to the City Hospital for treatment, and you were in an insensible condition for twenty hours after that. I saw you there on the following day, and you appeared to me to be dead. I thought you were, at any rate,

and so did the doctors there; and I directed the inquest. To-morrow it will all come out in the papers, and you will be able to read all about it. Under the belief that you were dead, they buried you from the hospital, and no doubt the men who caught you in the cemetery were students, who went there to get your body for dissection."

"I know better," said Benson. "That's a pipe dream you're giving me."

"Mr. Benson, I see by the pin on the lapel of your coat that you belong to the same order as myself. Give me your hand; and now, on the honor of a brother, I swear to you that I am giving you the truth!"

"Then I am reconciled to all that you have told me, and believe it," said Benson. "I want you now to go for The Crescent saloon man who killed me, the City Hospital authorities who buried me, and the coroner's jury who pronounced me dead; *and for all that they are worth!*"

"I have," replied Mr. Whitman, "already arrested the saloon keeper, but for another crime, and if you can only prove that he stole your money, I will add robbery to the charge of criminal assault upon you, which I have made against him. As it is late, however, I will take up your case for you in the morning, and see if I can se-

cure the proof of robbery I wish to have against him. Now, I recognize you as a brother in distress, and I want to help you. I see your hat and shoes are gone, but that I can account for. They will be restored to you to-morrow, as also will your watch. Until then, however, I will supply you with the former. I have shoes which will probably fit you, in my private office. My hat, however, is a silk one, and if you do not object to wearing such you are welcome to its use until you can secure your own; and as for your lost money, I will put a detective on the trail for it as soon as I can obtain the proper clue to work on."

There is no telling how long this interview would have lasted had it not been interrupted at this moment by a gentle rap upon the door.

"Someone comes to see me on business at this late hour, and as interviews in this office are usually considered confidential, I must ask you, Mr. Benson, to step into my private office for a minute or two, where I will see you later. Help yourself to my hat and shoes, and make yourself at home."

Walter Whitman opened the door, with an air of confidence, and then recoiled. Was he sure? He stood and stared at the figure standing there in the dark.

"Is it a dream, or am I deceived?" said he, aloud.

"Neither," said the figure, slowly extending her hand. "Walter Whitman, do you know me?"

"Do I know that voice? Could I ever have forgotten you, once having loved you, and for the past five years having mourned you as one dead? Come in from the night, and tell me how you came to be alive and wandering alone about the streets of Baden at this hour."

"Walter Whitman, you believed me dead, but I am living; and as a last resort for the relief of my distracted mind and almost broken heart, I come to you for aid!"

"Be comforted, Ella Coleman. Whatever aid I can render you is at your service. Be seated now, and tell me all your troubles."

There was something so gentle, so assuring, and so comforting in all his words and manner, that a load seemed lifted from the mother's heart.

"Have I not aided you before?" he softly asked her.

"Yes, many a time; and I can never forget you."

"You have some care upon your mind,"

said he, in softest tones, "and it is barely possible that I can remove it. What is it?"

"Walter Whitman, when I left this country, seven years ago, I left my child behind; my circumstances at the time would not admit of my taking her to Europe with me. As the safest place within my means to have her cared for, I placed her in the Baden Orphanage, expecting to return and claim her at some future day. In Italy I worked as a menial for her sake, for five long years. In my efforts to earn an honorable existence for us both I succeeded, and but yesterday I landed here to claim my child. Imagine the horrible intelligence I have this day received about her. Carried away, in her innocence and youth, by parties who forged papers to secure her, and whose whereabouts cannot be learned; and for some base servitude I dare not think of! All day have I run from one authority to another, crossing death itself in my aimless search to find her. No one knew her abductors. None offered any hope to me for her discovery. I therefore, as a last resort, have wandered here, in my distress, to appeal to you for your aid in finding out her whereabouts. Can you not give me some hope to live on until this dreary night is over?"

“Ella Coleman, be comforted. I can assist you, and I am going to do so. Your presence here to-night has been a great surprise, but nevertheless a joyful and a most fortuitous one to me. I can and will assist you. With little time I can locate your daughter. I feel assured I know of her whereabouts this minute.”

“Walter Whitman, speak! Is she alive?”

“Yes, she was so yesterday.”

“Is she well? Is she happy? Is she safe?”

“Aye, Ella Coleman, well, happy, and safe, and as pure and innocent as when you plucked her from the chalice of your heart and planted her in the sanctuary of the orphanage seven years ago.”

“Ah, Walter, you have raised a mountain from my heart. What news could be more glorious to a half-crazed mother? Let me thank you for this solace. May I fall upon my knees and offer you my feeble gratitude?”

“No, Ella Coleman; rather let the homage come from me.”

“Why—how—what homage do you owe?”

Whitman gently reached out and took her hand and lightly pressed it.

“Ten years ago,” said he, “I courted

you. I was impetuous and premature, and you turned to the emblem of your sorrow you had about you, and asked me not to torture you. In deference to the sanctity of your holy wishes at that time, I turned away and buried my emotions. I saw where I was wrong, and yet I loved you fondly. You glided from my sight before I knew you contemplated going. Even your lovely child was hidden where I least expected to find her, and thus I lost your trail. Now the objections to my love, which then prevailed, do not exist. In all your lifetime I never felt that I had such a claim upon you as I have at present. I have found your daughter for you, I have restored her to your heart as beautiful and innocent as when you left her."

"Tell me, Walter Whitman," said she, trembling, where is my child?"

"I will show her to you in another minute," he replied.

"Speak out, and calm my throbbing heart!" she cried.

"May I claim that heart?" he softly answered, "when I bring the child?"

"Let me think a minute. It seems so long."

"Yes, the longest ten years I have ever

endured in all my life," responded Whitman.

"And—you have loved me all that time?"

"Yes, and even longer."

"I thought it was a foolish sentiment when you first told me of it."

"Do you believe my statement now?"

"Could I do otherwise?"

"May I love you still?"

"Ask me in the presence of my daughter when she is restored."

"She knows I love you."

"When did you inform her?"

"Ten minutes ago."

"Where?"

"In this office."

"Restore her to me, Walter, and my heart is yours."

Whitman walked rapidly to the door leading to his sitting-room, and, opening it, exclaimed:

"Katy, come! I have a surprise in store for you."

Mrs. Coleman closely followed him. At the call of her name the girl ran forward into the detective's office. Then there was an instantaneous pause, a burst, a cry of joy, and the two women fell into each other's arms, weeping and sobbing.

“Mamma, mamma!”

“My child, my child!” And the stern and stoic detective, unused to such emotion, turned aside to let the women talk, while his glistening eyes told of the tender chord that had been touched.

“And now, Kate,” interrupted the elated detective, “I have another surprise, and I trust a joyful one. There came to Baden on yesterday’s steamer a gentleman in whom you may be interested. His name, I believe, is Benson.”

“Oh, wasn’t it terrible, his untimely death!” interrupted Mrs. Coleman.

“Oh, the poor fellow who died at ‘The Crescent!’ ” exclaimed Kate.

“Well, it’s a mistake,” replied Whitman. “Benson was not dead, but sleeping. In the great economy of nature these errors are sometimes made. And since I have good reasons to believe that you both know him, I will wake him up and introduce him to you.

“Mr. Benson, some people here wish to see you,” called the detective.

“Say, I haven’t got my sample case, but I can tell you all about it,” exclaimed the drummer. “How many sacks do you want?”

Benson came into the general office as re-

quested, with Whitman's beaver on, not dreaming who the callers were.

"Mr. Benson, Mr. Benson! To life, to life again!" exclaimed the ladies.

"By the Great Horn Block! If this isn't more happiness than I expected to encounter when I went out to the cemetery this afternoon. Why, here's the prima donna, and here's the little girl that caught the flies for me yesterday. Somebody introduce me to you, quick. This is Kate, and if I had a dollar I would bet it on her being the missing beauty. Kate, the lineal descendant of the Mustard King of old Kentucky. But I haven't a dollar and I cannot bet; the old villain at The Crescent got it all."

"Yes, I saw them from above while they were robbing you!" exclaimed the girl.

"Then we have all the evidence we need," interrupted Whitman, "and you shall have your money back to-morrow, Mr. Benson."

A loud rap at the door now interrupted the conversation, and Whitman opened the door.

"Ah, you, Paul," said the detective. "Come in."

"Oh, Paul, Paul, my only friend in distress!" cried the girl; and they met, and

for a moment fell to congratulating one another on the happy denouement; and then she turned to her mother and Benson, and introduced him as the only bright solace in her wretched captivity.

"I have called," said Paul Jones to his chief, "to report, and to turn in this case, as it did not belong at 'The Crescent.' "

"It is mine!" shouted Benson. "Give it here, and now I am ready for orders."

"We captured and handcuffed the villain. O'Hoolyhan took him to jail, and the wife went along; and I locked up the house and have brought you the key. And here's all the money I found in the drawer; some queer-looking coins. Here's a marked one, 'I. C. U.' on its face."

"That's mine," exclaimed Benson. "Nellie gave it to me as a talisman; it was coined in '33."

"Where did you find it?" asked Whitman.

"In his cash drawer," said Paul.

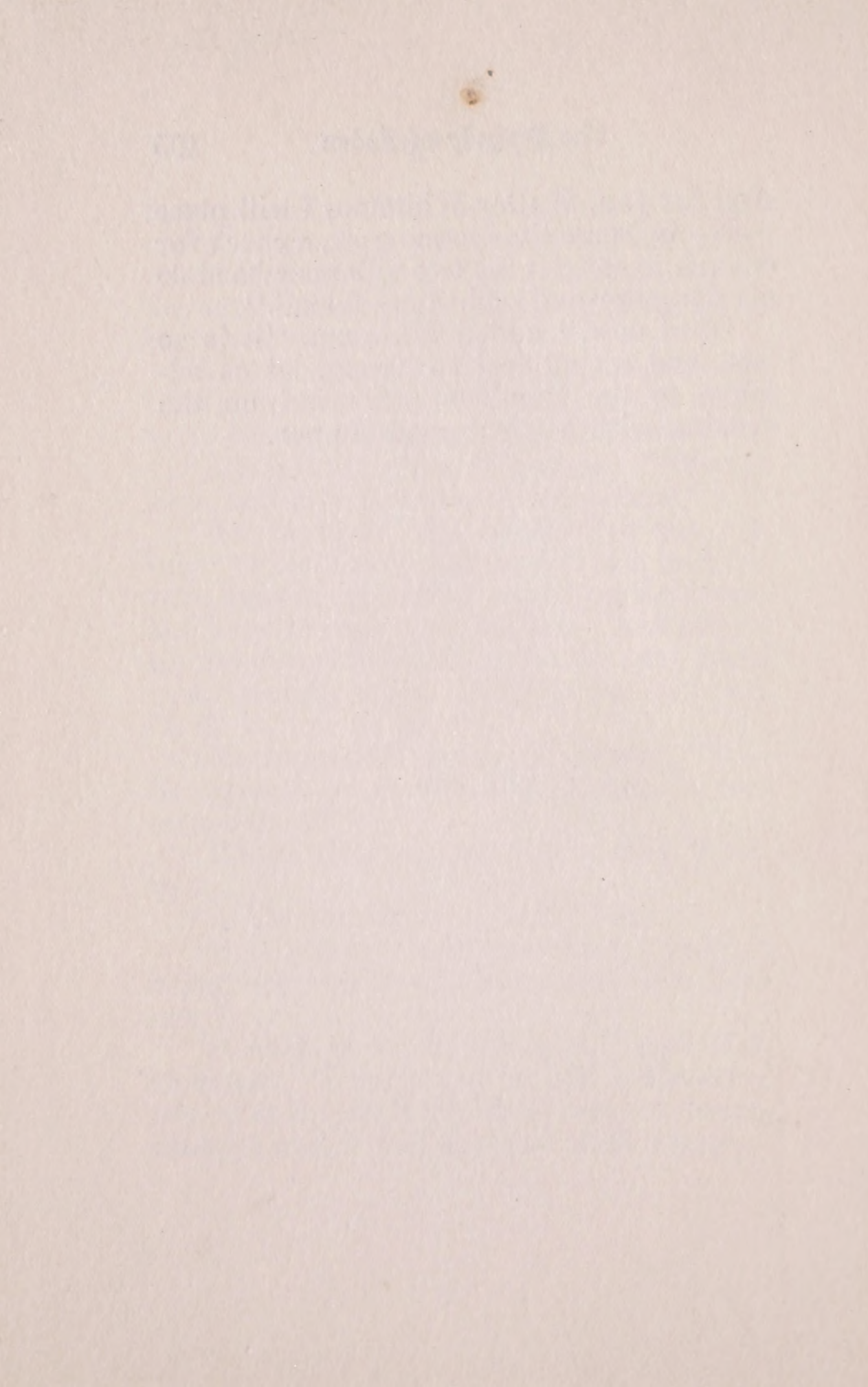
"It is yours," said the chief; "may it bring you wealth and happiness, Mr. Benson."

"It shall do both; for now," said Mrs. Coleman, "I am going to add a thousand others to it, and Nellie shall come on immediately, and I will see you both married.

And for you, Walter Whitman, I will place with you, some time to-morrow, a check for enough to convict the two villains who stole my daughter and robbed my friend."

"And now," added Whitman, "it is so late, and we all feel so happy, let us adjourn to the Bon-Ton and wind up the evening with a royal good supper.

THE END





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